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BOLSHEVISM AT WORK



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The Crusader.



20 abr. 1919 N.Y. (Kerensky)
26/8/1919 Vladimir Volianoff (Levin)..

BOLSHEVISM AT WORK

BY

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respondent of "The Manchester Guardian"
in Finland in 1918, and in Finland, the
Baltic Provinces & Russia in 1919*

“. . . nothing extenuate,
Or aught set down in malice.”

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
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FOREWORD

MOST of the following pages were prepared, along with much other material, in Moscow, in July and August of last year. The interview with Lenin, and the sections on Education, Justice, and Transport, are printed substantially as they appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, by the courtesy of whose Editor they reappear.

In the changing conditions through which Russia is passing any such studies must necessarily be imperfect, and I do not claim for these anything more than that they are as perfect as the time at my disposal and the conditions would allow.

Their incompleteness is further increased by the continued embargo laid by the authorities on my papers and memoranda. But a happy chance has brought copies of some of them into my possession, and I hasten* to give them to the public in the hope that they may prove useful in clarifying opinion on a subject which has been shrouded, up to the present, in mystification.

WILLIAM T GOODE.

LONDON,
January 1920.

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INTRODUCTORY

IN thinking over the problem of Russia it had been borne in on me that a Government which could last for nearly two years against the colossal difficulties which have beset, and are still besetting, it, must have some good reason for enduring. Up to the moment of my departure from Reval I had heard nothing about the Soviet Republic in which the word "destructive" did not appear, and yet it seemed to me that, whether for good or for evil, there must be a constructive side to it. To find out what was the reason of the endurance of the Bolshevistic Government and the particular form its constructiveness was assuming seemed to me therefore a completely sufficient reason for attempting to reach Moscow. For I felt sure that the thing I wished to arrive at could only be found by personal contact with the Government itself. It involved the putting away from one's mind of all preconceived notions gained from newspapers, conversation, and White Books, and studying on the spot the

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character and mechanism of the Government. It involved also a study of the conditions of life, of labour, of education—in a word, of all those constructive processes which make up the economic and social life of a country. It involved an investigation into the conditions of manufactures and transport, and, as far as possible, into the conditions of agriculture and the life of the peasant. There was a further point which weighed with me for much—an investigation such as I wished to make would perforce bring me into close contact with the leaders of the Government and possibly with many other men not directly concerned in the Government, and this contact would give me an excellent opportunity of studying the men who are responsible for what is going on in Russia to-day. It will be seen, therefore, that I had proposed to myself to study Bolshevism at home in order to discover the secret of its lasting and to estimate if possible its chances of continuing to last.

My first attempt to reach Moscow in company with a Finn and a Dane proved unsuccessful, though I discovered later that in my case a mistake had been made. It involved nearly three weeks of intensely difficult travelling under circumstances that were hard and wearisome. We tried to enter by Pskov, but being turned back from there, we were helped by the Esthonian commander to cross by Isborsk to Ostrov. That bare statement must stand for a hideous journey of eighteen hours by auto-lorry, farmer's droshky, and on foot, through Isborsk village, Palkina, Griboulka—the last post of the Esthonians—across No Man's Land to

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Gribuchi, the first "Red" outpost, to Novo Usítovo, and finally Ostrov. This was a "Red" brigade quarters, and from there, after a long argumentative fight with the Commissary and the Staff, we travelled by rail through Rezhitsa to Veliki Luki, always under guard. Here we were held up while pourparlers went on with Moscow, and in the end were ordered back across the frontier by the same route over which we entered.

Our progress had been comparatively swift, and this setback caused me much soreness of heart, the more so that I discovered it was due to the incredible folly of the Finn, our leader. From him we parted at Walk, from which place he went on to Riga, got himself over the frontier by some means to Dvinsk, was recognized at once, and is now in prison in Moscow. The Dane and I returned to Reval, from which place I negotiated by wireless with Moscow, being finally allowed to enter Russia, taking with me Mr. Keeling. The Dane was definitely refused.

The first journey, though a failure so far as Moscow is concerned, was excellent from the point of view of the opportunities it afforded me for observation of a manifold kind. It proved that in this part of Russia at any rate the land is being completely cultivated; that crops promised to be good; that the countryside is quiet, hardworking, normal; that in country towns there is no anarchy, but orderly security and work-a-day activities; that the transport system is working fairly well in spite of the effects of the Great War; and from the very varied nature of the posts through which

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we passed, it threw great light on military activity. So much, in fact, was gained from this journey that the opportunity it gave me, through failure, of giving to the world the result of my observations (I sent the story from Reval), partly consoled me for the failure itself.

The second journey followed at first the same route as the former, for I found myself at Pskov once more, the town more dilapidated than ever. The Esthonian colonel was once again our good friend, for he got us along the *chaussée* to the last of his posts in quick time by automobile, on the direct route to Ostrov. From there, however, across No Man's Land, which here was some 10 versts wide, was a loathsome journey: a fight going on round us, and we laden like pack mules with our belongings, toiling along in the great heat of the falling sun. From that first "Red" outpost until we reached Ostrov was a strain that left its mark, on me at least, for many days, both mentally and bodily.

The reply to my radiogram was for me a *passé-partout*, but the presence of my companion caused the usual interrogatories and arguments with staffs to be much fiercer than before. Finally we got as far as Veliki Luki, and there this interminable inquisition was repeated and continued until word was sent by the telegraphic talking machine that I was to proceed to Moscow alone, taking with me the credentials of Mr. Keeling. This was disconcerting, but nothing remained but to obey. I accordingly departed for Moscow, taking with me the packet of papers, but on my arrival the strain

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of the past four weeks brought on a temporary collapse, and I took to bed for three days. It was only at the end of that time that I learned that the credentials presented by Mr. Keeling had been refused, and that he had been sent back to the frontier.

There followed for me a month of intense work according to a programme drawn up by myself for the first time while in bed under the doctor's care. As this programme was purely my own, and as it was then put on paper for the first time, it is obvious that there could be no collusion between myself and the Bolshevik leaders, no preparation on their part. And I followed out the scheme of work I had laid down, leaving when it was finished, though I should have preferred to complete it by going across country to the other fronts.

Moscow deserves a word to itself. The stories of uprisings there and their effects, of the actions of the Bolsheviks on the population, of the general terror and starvation, had prepared me for the spectacle of a devastated city, of great destruction, of an almost complete cessation of normal life. Imagine then my stupefaction at finding streets thronged with people pursuing their daily business, trams running packed with passengers, droshkies numerous and as extortionate as in the old days, street markets as numerous and as active as ever, and a general air of peace and security over everything. The streets were clean, the boulevards and public gardens well cared for, the churches open for service constantly and announcing the fact by their bells, and order maintained by police who

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were all but invisible, and an armed soldier here and there, generally occupied in smoking a cigarette.

Of destruction the signs were small and infrequent, mostly bullet holes in windows, chippings of the plaster and ornaments of the façades, but in one open place a mass of bricks which represented a large building destroyed in the rising of June 1918, along with some tall houses in the vicinity. Bridges and churches were intact, and the Art Galleries, to my joy, were well cared for and even extended. The contrast between the external aspect of Moscow and the stories prevalent in the West was indeed remarkable.

One feature of the streets was disconcerting. The shops were mostly boarded up, save small shops where traffic in small mixed articles went on, and hairdressers' establishments. Many places had closed because stocks were non-existent, others because the chief distributing agencies were the Soviet shops in every district. They were numbered, and were of all kinds, even to chemists' shops, where goods could be bought on cards. Soviet cafés and eating-houses were open, as also a number of private ones, which, I was informed later, would probably close as the Soviet system became more firmly established.

But the old glitter of the streets had, because of all this, disappeared, and it was the absence of the ordinary spectacle of the shop windows which gave a peculiar quality to street life. The great hotels were either homes for ministries or were filled with the employés of the Government, or students, or workers, who lived there. And the

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great restaurants and clubs had also been turned to the use of the Soviet or of the workmen.

The town, in fact, was cleaner, physically and morally, than on my previous visits, but the general puritanical air was a little depressing, a quality that has been noted by others also. Life was hard, food being sold at prices that seemed fantastic; but during the month I was there I could not find more than a reminder that food was scarce in the appearance of the public—I certainly did not find the evidences of severe hunger and starvation which I had been led to expect. And in the case of the children, among the thousands I saw and studied there was a general air of well-being, for the fullest care is bestowed on them—a fact diametrically opposed to the statements made to me before leaving. In short, my experience of Moscow was the death of many illusions previously created in my mind.

I passed a month in fierce work, and then left to try and reach home. From Moscow to Revel is, in normal times, a two days' journey; it lasted with me for twelve days. I returned to Rezhitsa, was there held up because a fierce fight was going on over the route of my return pass, a fight which brought about the fall of Pskov into "Red" hands and flowed right across Isborsk. Willy-nilly I had to remain till a fairly quiet spot could be discovered on the frontier where I might cross, and it ended by my getting through by Marienhausen and Alt Schwaneburg, thence to Walk and Reval. The journey from Rezhitza (Red) to Alt Schwaneburg (White) was long, arduous, and peculiarly distressing;

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even yet I do not like to refer to it. And once arrived at Reval my troubles, instead of ending, began, for after thirty-six hours I was arrested by the Esthonian military officials at the orders of the British authorities ; and when after thirty hours I succeeded in getting free, my liberty was brief. I was lured soon after on to a British warship and was carried off to the British naval station at Björkö, and kept a prisoner till I was landed at Sheerness more than three weeks later.

The chapters of this book contain little of a descriptive character, they are mostly close studies of the Soviet system, and were prepared in Moscow. Not all are here, for my papers are still detained. I make no apology for putting the personal interviews with Lenin and Tchitcherin first ; they are highly important documents, deserving of study.

II

AN INTERVIEW WITH LENIN

THE interview with Lenin had been a matter of some difficulty to arrange ; not because he is unapproachable—he goes about with as little external trappings or precautions as myself—but because his time is so precious. He, even more than the other Commissaries, is continuously at work. But at last I had secured a free moment and drove from my room, across the city, to one of the gates of the Kremlin. I had taken the precaution at the beginning of my stay to secure a pass that set me free from any possible molestation from officials or police, and this gave me admission to the Kremlin enclosure. Entrance to the Kremlin is naturally guarded ; it is the seat of the Executive Government ; but the formalities are no more than have to be observed at Buckingham Palace or the House of Commons. A small wooden office beyond the bridge, where a civilian grants passes, and a few soldiers, ordinary Russian soldiers, one of whom receives and verifies the pass, were all there was to be seen at this entrance. It is always being said that Lenin is guarded by Chinese. There were no Chinese here.

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I entered, mounted the hill, and drove across to the building where Lenin lives, in the direction of the large platform where formerly stood the Alexander statue, now removed. At the foot of the staircase were two more soldiers, Russian youths, but still no Chinese. I went up by a lift to the top floor, where I found two other young Russian soldiers, but no Chinese, nor in any of the three visits which I paid to the Kremlin did I see any.

I hung up my hat and coat in the ante-chamber, passed through a room in which clerks were at work and entered the room in which the Executive Committee of the Council of People's Commissaries holds its meetings—in other words, the Council Chamber of the Cabinet of the Soviet Republic. I had kept my appointment strictly to time, and my companion passed on (rooms in Russia are always *en suite*) to let Lenin know that I had arrived. I then followed into the room in which Lenin works and waited a minute for his coming. Here let me say that there is no magnificence about this suite of rooms. They are well and solidly furnished; the Council Chamber is admirably arranged for its purpose, but everything is simple, and there is an atmosphere of hard work about everything. Of the meretricious splendour I had heard so much there is not a trace.

I had but the time to make these observations, mentally, when Lenin entered the room. He is a man of middle height, about fifty years old, active, and well proportioned. His features at first sight seem to have a slight Chinese cast, and his hair and pointed beard have a ruddy brown tinge. The

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head is well domed, and his brow broad and well raised. He has a pleasant expression in talking, and indeed his manner can be described as distinctly prepossessing. He speaks clearly in a well-modulated voice, and throughout the interview he never hesitated or betrayed the slightest confusion. Indeed, the one clearly cut impression he left on me was that here was a clear, cold brain, a man absolutely master of himself and of his subject, expressing himself with a lucidity that was as startling as it was refreshing.

My companion had seated himself on the other side of the table to act as interpreter in case of need; he was not wanted. After a word of introduction I asked what I should speak, French or German. He replied that if I did not object he would prefer to speak English, and that if I would only speak clearly and slowly he would be able to follow everything. I agreed, and he was as good as his word, for only once during the three-quarters of an hour that the meeting lasted did he stumble at a word, and then only for an instant; he had seized my meaning almost immediately.

I ought to state here that the thought of this interview had engaged me from the moment I had entered Russia. There were so many things I wanted to know, scores of questions occurred to me, and to secure the answers I longed to have would have required a discursive talk of hours had I begun my task with this interview. But by leaving it to the last my month's work had brought the answer to many of the questions, and others had been settled by a radiographic interview submitted from Lyons by a combination of American journalists. It behoved me

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therefore to utilize to the best advantage the time rigidly apportioned to me, wedged in between two important meetings. I had therefore reduced all my curiosity to three questions, to which the authoritative answers could be given only by Lenin himself, the head of the Government of the Soviet Republic. He knew quite well who I was; he did not know what I wanted. There could therefore be no question of preparation so far as he was concerned.

I had spoken of my questions to only one man, the Commissary who accompanied me, and he became very depressed, and gave it as his opinion that Lenin would not answer them. To his unfeigned astonishment, the questions were answered promptly, simply, and decisively, and when the interview was ended my companion naïvely expressed his wonderment.

The guidance of the interview was left to me. I began at once. I wanted to know how far the proposals which Mr. Bullitt took to the Conference at Paris still held good. Lenin replied that they still held good, with such modifications as the changing military situation might indicate. Later he added that in the agreement with Bullitt it had been stated that the changing military position might bring in alterations. Continuing, he said that Bullitt was unable to understand the strength of British and American capitalism, but that if Bullitt were President of the United States peace would soon be made.

Then I took up again the thread by asking what was the attitude of the Soviet Republic to the small nations who had split off the Russian Empire and had proclaimed their independence.

He replied that Finland's independence had been

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recognized in November 1917 ; that he (Lenin) had personally handed to Swinhufvud, then head of the Finnish Republic, the paper on which this recognition was officially stated ; that the Soviet Republic had announced sometime previously that no soldiers of the Soviet Republic would cross the frontier with arms in their hands ; that the Soviet Republic had decided to create a neutral strip or zone between their territory and Esthonia, and would declare this publicly ; that it was one of their principles to recognize the independence of all small nations, and that finally they had just recognized the independence of the Bashkir Republic—and, he added, the Bashkirs are a weak and backward people.

For the third time I took up the questioning, asking what guarantees could be offered against official propaganda among the Western peoples, if by any chance relations with the Soviet Republic were opened. His reply was that they had declared to Bullitt that they were ready to sign an agreement not to make official propaganda. As a Government they were ready to undertake that no official propaganda should take place. If private persons undertook propaganda they would do it at their own risk and be amenable to the laws of the country in which they acted. Russia has no laws, he said, against propaganda by British people. England has such laws ; therefore Russia is the more liberal-minded. They would permit, he said, the British, or French, or American Government to carry on propaganda of their own. He cried out against the Defence of the Realm Act, and as for freedom of the Press in France, he declared that he had just been reading

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Henri Barbusse's novel *Clarté*, in which were two censored patches. "They censor novels in free, democratic France!"

I asked if he had any general statement to make, upon which he replied that the most important thing for him to say was that the Soviet system is the best, and that English workers and agricultural labourers would accept it if they knew it. He hoped that after peace the British Government would not prohibit the publication of the Soviet Constitution. That, morally, the Soviet system is even now victorious, and that the proof of the statement is seen in the persecution of Soviet literature in free, democratic countries.

My allotted time had expired, and, knowing that he was needed elsewhere, I rose and thanked him, and, making my way back through Council Chamber and clerks' room to the stair and courtyard, where were the young Russian guards, I picked up my droshky and drove back across Moscow to my room to think over my meeting with Vladimir Ulianoff.

III

INTERVIEW WITH TCHITCHERIN

Commissary of the People for Foreign Affairs

THIS interview is an abridgment of that originally prepared, and is made from the rough notes which were taken on the occasion when I met Tchitcherin for the last time. It contains, however, the main points of the conversation.

He read through the carefully prepared interview with Lenin and agreed with it, considering it so fundamental that the Government generally would agree with what Lenin had said.

On the subject of propaganda, he continued, the very existence of the Soviet Republic, its continuing to hold out, its example, these were the strongest propaganda, far more powerful than any written material. They constituted the fact which prevented the Western Powers from leaving the Soviet Republic in peace. The man in the street, he went on, when he is suffering attributes his sufferings to God or to an Order which it is impossible to change. But if he should see the Soviet Republic where the workers are masters, that would turn him into a revolutionary. The worst campaign ever made

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is the campaign against the Soviet Republic, for the West understands that if the Soviet Republic can exist the peoples of the West will not long endure what they are enduring now. On intervention, he said, that those who are intervening support anarchy and starvation, and then say that where Bolshevism is, *there* are anarchy and starvation.

On Lenin's suggestion of a neutral strip between Bolshevik Russia and the small nations of the West, he said that it had been adopted by the proper authorities, meaning, I suppose, that it had been approved by the Government, but that if it were to be applied in fact, there must be negotiations. For instance, Esthonia must agree to it and negotiations must be opened. He interpolated here that I could say that the Soviet Republic is ready to conclude its military operations and to open negotiations for this purpose. In general, he said, that these small republics had been formed, and that an idea spread in Europe that they were conquered by the Bolsheviks. Ukrainia, he said, had not been conquered by the Bolsheviks at all, not a single soldier had been sent there by the Soviet Republic. It was Ukrainian soldiers in detachments who freed Ukrainia from the reactionary forces which were there before. That is why, he said, Denikin succeeds somewhat in Ukrainia (it should be remembered that this interview took place at the end of August), the Ukrainians are new, and not organized like the Soviet Republic. Now there has been concluded a military agreement for mutual help, but that means something quite different to the organization

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of the country. It means the unifying of the commands and the sending of military help, but, he went on, Ukrainia must organize and bear the brunt of its own difficulties. Up to the present Ukrainian armies are much younger and newer and less organized than those of the Soviet Republic, and consequently cannot defend themselves so well. Denikin's operations, he declared, are mostly turned against Ukrainia. The population is against him, the Ukrainian army also, and the bigger his front grows the more likely it is to break. He goes forward because he has tanks and strong cavalry, but when the Soviet Republic's operations begin seriously the Denikin bubble will be pricked.

On the question of the giving of terms to the border nations he said it would depend on the conditions in these various republics. Where the population was Bolshevik the Soviet Republic could not make terms with White Guards. In Esthonia, he said, the fight was at an end, it was going on only outside the country, so that Esthonia was hardly a case in point. He was very urgent in repeating that in the case of Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, it was not the Soviet Republic which conquered them, it was the people of the type of the "Reds" who did it themselves, and the Soviet Republic had allied itself with the various Soviet Republics in these States *after* these had come into existence. In answer to my question what would happen in countries where the Soviet Republic was dead (I had in mind the case of Esthonia), he said there was always a possibility of coming to a provisional understanding. He went on, that in agreement

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with Bullitt, it was clearly said that where in these countries there were Governments hostile to the Soviet Republic the population should have the possibility of changing their Government if they wished. It is a fundamental principle of the Soviet Republic that the development of a people must be its own work. For this reason, he said, no army was sent into Finland to free the Finns; that was the work of the Finns themselves. Russian troops were there, but no Russian troops were sent. The whole business was done by Finns. He confessed that Russians did take part in the beginning in demonstrations, but they were recalled by the Soviet Republic, and if volunteers went they were not stopped; that he called a personal matter. He ended up this part of the interview by stating that where there is support from outside for the White Guards, by which he meant the anti-Bolsheviks, the Soviet Republic cannot give moral support to this help by entering into peace terms with such a Government so long as it assisted from outside. The Soviet Republic, he declared, was ready to enter into agreements and negotiations with the Allies, but the terms could only be settled according to the situation prevailing at the precise moment when negotiations took place. He made a final statement of policy of the Bolshevik Republic. Its desire is to be left in peace, to resume peaceful relations with other peoples, and not to intervene in other countries. His Government, he said, wants peaceful relations with *all* other countries. The trade of the Republic is in the hands of the nation, and it can trade with any kind of commercial

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enterprise, a State monopoly, or a company, or a private merchant. It can entertain peaceful relations and accommodations with all. It can give raw materials which are needed by the whole world, and it badly wants machines itself.

IV

THE BOLSHEVIK ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY

INTERVIEW WITH MILIUTIN, ASSOCIATE COMMISSARY
OF NATIONAL ECONOMICS

HE is now Professor of Political Economics in the Moscow University, and is at the head of a very important Commissariat, that dealing with industries. I thought him best fitted to clear my ideas on the subject of nationalization of industries—a matter on which a good deal of cheap wit has been spent and many violent statements wasted. He listened courteously and patiently, and answered my questions without any hesitation or reserve, giving me all the assistance possible, in spite of being excessively busy, as are indeed all the Commissaries of the people.

His department manages some 3,000 nationalized plants, answering for 90 per cent. of the full production of the country. These embrace *mines* in the Moscow coal basin, producing 35 million poods a year; *textiles*, mostly in Vladimir, Tver, Nijny Novgorod and Ivano-Vosnesensk; *metals*, in

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Nijny Novgorod Government, in the north portion of Volga territory, Petrograd, and now Ouralsk. His statement covers about thirty Russian Governments, but does not include Ukrainia; nor are small or home industries nationalized.

Regarding the *conditions under which the factories are worked*, he described the system as follows: The head of every factory is a college of management of from three to five persons, a mixture of workers and specialists. But the people elected on this body must be ratified by the special section of the Supreme Council of National Economics at Moscow under which the particular factory falls.

The 3,000 factories are divided into State trusts, as, for instance, machine making, sugar making. In all there are some ninety trusts, of which forty are concerned with textile manufactures. Each of these trusts comes under the management of the particular section of the Supreme Council of Economics which is occupied with the industries they represent. Of these sections there are sixty, out of which fifty are concerned with production, ten with distribution, or are of a general character (statistical, legal, inspection, etc.). Control would seem to be pretty complete, since the first elective management is controlled by a trust, which in turn is controlled by a section, the whole controlled by the Supreme Council.

I was curious about the *trusts*, and he replied that each has its own administration appointed by the section of the Supreme Council under whose jurisdiction the trust falls. Further, that the function of a trust is much the same as that of

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a board of directors of a capitalist company. It distributes to the factories which form it raw materials, engineers; it regulates their output and controls their financial operations. I asked him plumply what his opinion was of this *elective system*, of its success in actual working. The elective system, he said, might be absurd in any country not centralized like Soviet Russia, but here the Supreme Council has to confirm the appointment of all candidates made by any local factory. It can, in fact, control the election, and thus any absurd results can be eliminated, while the association of engineers and specialists on these bodies with workmen is provided for through their governance by the chief board of State trusts.

The Professional Alliances (Trades' Unions) or unions of industries have a special interest in eliminating any friction in the nomination of candidates, and as far as possible all is done in conjunction with the local professional alliances. Business ideas and practices, he said, govern all the relations of trusts with factories. The system goes further. It eliminates all conflicts between workers and the factory managements. (This corresponds to Melnichansky's statement that strikes are unrecognized; they are illogical, and should not happen.)

And through this system the workers in a factory become interested in their work, they are personally conscious of the part they play in the efficiency of the factory. And it is conditions of efficiency that are the sole guiding motive for all, but especially for the Supreme Council.

As to its *success* in working, he declared that

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under the conditions created by the Civil War, by the cutting off for a whole year of supplies of raw material and fuel, whatever stability there is in the industries of Russia is due solely to this system ; that in spite of food and other difficulties there is great labour discipline, and that the full systematization of industry gives the Supreme Council the power to make plans for production, to distribute orders where they can be best carried out, according to resources—in a word, that it gives full knowledge of what can be done, and where, for the best. Under this system full centralization is reached and it has become possible to administer industry according to special needs and to organize a complete system of national economics. Its *solidity* is best demonstrated by the ability to set up new plant, and they have put up two new central electric stations, various new plants, several new railways have been built in Podolia, and in the Moscow Government a new locomotive works, turning out two new engines in the week of this interview. Of course, the system, like all new systems, has to fight against the difficulties of present conditions obtaining in Russia, and it has its defects. Yet in an existence of less than two years it has brought forward from the ranks of the workers a series of excellent administrators, of managers, men who have been placed on the Supreme Council—in fact, it is a system *selective of the best brains of the workers, from the masses up.*

That, it seems to me, is high praise ; but I put a last question on the effect of this system on *output*. As Miliutin said, the workers' output depends on

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food and conditions generally, it is a physical and physiological proposition. Owing to difficult conditions which we do not conceal, we have succeeded only in some factories to raise the output, especially in those working on war orders. And during the last year industrial Russia has been living on the food of those parts of inner Russia, which normally were unable to supply surplus food. This surplus food came in ordinary times from Ukrainia and from Ural, but these had then been cut off. The conditions are not sufficiently stable for a norm to be established, and yet in spite of all there are a number of factories in which there is an absolute increase in the production, which as a conclusion confirmed the statement of Krassin, the Commissary of Ways and Communications.

With these statements of Miliutin should be compared the following description of a day spent in a factory situated to the south of Moscow, where I met directors, a workmen's committee, and the management committee, in addition to three English mill managers who had worked there continuously for years.

Miliutin's remark on the selective nature of this industrial system was borne out on this journey to Serpukhoff. I met there an extremely intelligent young workman, a former locksmith in the Konshin mills, who had been elected president of the local Soviet and was summoned to Moscow for consultation by the Supreme Council. Also there travelled with me three men, textile workers, who were now members of the Council of the Textile

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Trust. One of them explained lucidly in German the work of his trust, besides throwing much light on the forward plans of the Supreme Council of Economics. Here were clear cases of a selection of good brains, due to the system, for all four had been workmen.

THE WORKING OF A FACTORY IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

Pursuing my inquiries into the working of industries under a system of nationalization, I took a journey of from four to five hours by train, south to Serpukhoff, where are the Konshin textile factories, to look them over. The town, which is quite prettily situated, is some three miles from the railway station, and is a town of factories. The Konshin enterprise has four mills, spinning, weaving, dyeing, and printing mills. In normal times 15,000 hands are employed, and even under the present stringent conditions some 6,000 are working; so that it formed a good object-lesson in the management of a huge factory under nationalization. But it is not only a factory, it is almost a town, for in these far-away Russian manufactories everything has to be provided, not only for manufacture, but also for the life of the workers, housing, schools, hospitals, medical attendance, baths, meeting and recreation rooms, farm, corn-mills and bakery—everything. The town can do nothing: it is the factory that does and gives all. It generates its own electricity in a superbly built and installed generating station, has built its own railway to a forest to supply itself with wood for fuel, since

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naphtha and coal are cut off, and presents a number of problems and opportunities which are entirely lacking to a similar undertaking in Lancashire. Its fabrics were well known before the war, outside of Russia. The character of its present output has changed for obvious reasons.

Among its mill managers are three men, from Lancashire, and on the general direction chosen by the workmen are two former directors, a director and the technical manager—their election being an evidence of the confidence they had generated in their workmen. Altogether it was not only a place worth visiting, but from its size and the character of the personnel it was likely to prove instructive on the Soviet system of running industries.

The technical manager was quite frank. According to him the system, in the early days of its action, was disastrous. The workmen, who are peasants drawn from the surrounding villages, and who leave for tilling or harvesting their land when these become necessary, were unable to understand anything except that the Revolution gave them the right to do as they pleased. The output went down to 40 per cent., and chaos in government ensued. But with experience, and by changing the powers of the various committees, an improved condition of things had come about, work went on smoothly, though even yet there were causes of trouble existing, and this year had seen the factory and the system satisfactorily adjusted.

Each mill has its own workmen's committee, who are elected, and there is a management com-

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mittee of five members for the four mills, on which are elected workmen, members of the Professional Alliance (Union) and technical staff. Then, as this district is a textile working district, the eleven cotton mills in it are organized into a State Trust, which controls 22,000 workers. The Trust has a directing committee of nine members, of whom three are elected by workmen, three by the Professional Alliances, and three by the local branch of the Supreme Council of National Economics, which governs *all* industries.

This committee governs the eleven mills in all senses. It controls their financial arrangements, and all estimates of whatever nature must be put in six months in advance; they are then submitted to the appropriate section of the Supreme Council for ratification, finally going before the Supreme Council of National Economics itself.

Each item of these estimates can be examined by the Trust Committee, and they are able to compare items from one mill with corresponding items from others. The scheme allows for complete control of the distribution of raw material, of orders, and the governing idea is that of correspondence between the mills and mutual help.

The committee I met governed eleven cotton mills. For those using flax other committees were formed, and so on. I asked about the taking on of men or their dismissal, and learned that it is really done in the first instance by the workmen's committee in the mills, discussed with the management committee, and is only controlled in a general way by the Committee of the Trust.

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The Trust Committee works hand in hand with the Professional Alliances (Unions) in their local branch. Delegates attend the meetings, and one member of the Alliances has a vote in the proceedings. In this way all reason for friction between them is removed. It might be thought that this is guild socialism. I was told it is *not*. The mills are not in the hands of the unions, who are only partly controlling the industry.

But by the composition and working of the committees all friction is obviated. That this must be so is obvious when one considers that every workman in the mills, whatever his trade—spinner, smith, etc.—is a member of the same Alliance (textiles), and is fully represented on all committees. This formation of unions by industry and not by trade has another good quality. It prevents *sectional* strikes; further, a strike in one mill need not affect other mills.

The workmen's committees have their hands full with the labour discipline, observation of rules and laws, matters affecting the health, housing, culture of the workers; and the men I met, the chairmen and the committee members, seemed highly intelligent, and were evidently proud of their position. They control yet another matter. Workmen are allowed by law to proceed to their villages in search of supplies, and to bring back amounts up to 2 poods in weight (80 lb.). The lists of those people are drawn up and certified by the workmen's committees, though it can be imagined what an element of uncertainty it places in the hands of the management, especially when

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in addition orders for mobilization of a certain percentage of workers may arrive at any moment.

Workmen are paid according to very elaborate tariffs, which have been prepared for all occupations whatsoever. Of this I have spoken in my report on the Commissariat of Labour. It is here that the cause of present trouble exists. A rigidity of tariff allows no margin within which the management can act; but attention has been drawn to this, and a revision in the sense required is being undertaken.

My frank discussion with the management, the Englishmen, and the committees left the impression that this huge concern was being managed successfully on the Soviet Committee system, and that in a time of peculiar and great difficulty. The system allows co-operation in industry between mills, prevents friction between Professional Alliances (Unions) and management, and stimulates the workers. That socialistic management should stimulate *emulation* was indeed a surprise. But I was told it is true, and that an exhibition of comparative output at Moscow provides a sufficient incentive to competitive work.

A FURTHER NOTE ON INDUSTRIES.

From my long conversation with the three workmen who are now members of the Textile Trust Committee I gathered much that throws light on the condition and prospects of industry.

Thus this committee controls nearly 500 factories engaged in textile manufacture, linen, cotton,

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cloth, silk, rope, and thread: factories that are working to-day. I have previously described how it is responsible for the approval of the estimates of the factories controlled by it. It was surprising to learn that decisions had been taken of an anti-Bolshevik nature, e.g. in cases where the committee was unable to supply the thing needed—dyestuffs—*factories were allowed to buy from speculators*; and in combustibles, authority was given to each factory independently to supply itself—a thing I had seen in operation at Serpukhoff and at the Moscow waterworks. Such things are confirmation from another quarter of my statement elsewhere that the communistic practice of the Bolsheviks is imperfect.

The buying of flax, first done by individual exploiters for export, then by the Co-operative Societies for the same purpose, is now done by the Soviets, under the Trust Committee. Much had been given out to the *cotton* factories to work. It is cut into short lengths to make it convenient for use in the cotton machinery; in some cases machinery has been altered with the same end in view. But the bulk of four years' stocks remains in hand, unexported, ready for trade.

Like other trusts, this Textile Trust has in mind the proper housing of the workers, and is planning to secure it. For the development of the factories it is to build light railway lines to connect them with the main lines, and help also the workers. Some of these have already been built, and returns in one year repay the cost of building.

Talking of the condition and the future of the

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Russian industries, it surprised me to learn that even in the midst of the civil war and all its attendant difficulties and horrors, the Trust Committees and the Supreme Council have a real forward policy. And enterprise after enterprise was pictured out to me, from which I extract only one. The great turf bogs are to be exploited. Existing conditions have warned them that Moscow must be independent for light and heat of the Donetz basin and the Baku Wells. At Bogorotsk, 70 kilometers from Moscow, a generating station burning turf is at work. Another, similar, at Schaturskaya, 90 kilometers off, will begin to function in January. At Kashira, works for using the soft coal of the Moscow province, will generate 15,000 h.p.—also for Moscow.

It had been my intention to push as far as one of these turf-burning stations, and see for myself. Time did not allow. But there is sufficient in the interview with Miliutin, the visit to Serpukhoff, and the reports of these workmen, to disprove the statement that the Bolsheviki have destroyed the industry of Russia.

V

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INTERVIEW WITH SEREDA, COMMISSARY
OF AGRICULTURE

THINKING carefully over this long interview, I have come to the conclusion that it was one of the most significant. Russia, in spite of the industrialization of many towns, and the partial industrialization of some countrysides, is yet a land of peasant farmers, very many millions in number, and the question of the land is the question *par excellence* by which Governments have fallen and by which Governments will stand.

Further, it showed me that the Soviet Republic does not take up any subject of collective importance until it feels itself competent to deal with it, but once taken up, the treatment of it is as complete and *minute* as human ingenuity can make it. Few loopholes of escape are left, and the covering of the land with a network of authorities, all acting under a centralized general authority, ensures that whatever action the Soviet may finally take will be guided by as complete a knowledge as it is possible to obtain.

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Lastly, as the interview shows, where the introduction of a collective system comes up forcibly against deep-rooted habits and prejudices, the leaders are sufficiently subtle and supple to proceed slowly, altering for the time being the purely collective attitude, but trying by all means of education and demonstration to remove the prejudices, reform the habits, and bring about the triumph of collectivism. It is not only in matters affecting the land, but in other directions also, that I have reason to think that the purely communistic attitude is being, or has been modified temporarily, with a view to its completer success later on.

Distribution of Land—Its Ownership.—After the October Revolution some 25 million hectares of land, formerly the private property of landowners, were given over to the peasants. Before that Revolution land had been seized irregularly, the peasants, weary of the vacillations of the Kerensky Government, and fearing that the promises of land made to them would not be fulfilled, seized it, and the punitive expeditions sent out by the Kerensky Government to take it back led to the horrors of a *Jacquérie*, with which the world is acquainted. But, on the whole, the amount thus seized was not large, for the habits of the peasants, formed through long ages, acted against forcible expropriation. So far as could be done, land was given by the Soviet Republic to the peasants; the process of distribution is still going on, or the claims to land being adjusted, by an army of 5,000 agricultural surveyors. But already, as the elaborate cartograms of the subject in the department of agriculture show, in two Governments,

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Astrakhan and Saratof, the distribution of land among peasants is complete; in other Governments complete in varying proportions.

The Principle of Distribution arranges for giving to a family the amount of land which it can work, and a rough scale for the distribution can be at once got in any district from the amount of land available for distribution, and the number of families requiring it. But local conditions, character of soil, etc., make the amounts given vary much. And whereas in some provinces the needs of the peasantry can be fully met, while in others, owing to density of population, they cannot, the Commissariat of Agriculture is making arrangements to solve this difficulty by transplanting peasants.

Form of Tenure.—According to the fundamental land laws, the land is given to people who can utilize it, without the application of hired labour; thus the right is created rather in the use that can be made of land than in the land itself. For if a man ceases to work his land, it lapses again to the State; also, a peasant can leave his land to a son who will work it, if not, as above, it once more lapses. And in the distribution of assistance, preference is given to collective ownership, above the individual, since the chief aim of the Soviets is to establish the régime of collective work.

That does not mean that there is any forcible action on the individual peasant—there is none—but by the working of State domains, State farms, as models, and by farm communes, by publishing the comparative results, every effort is made to show the peasant the advantage coming from collec-

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tive working. Indeed, the *organization of assistance* and the granting of aid in the development of the land is no inconsiderable part of the work of the Commissariat of Agriculture. It works through the land committees which have been set up in every province, to whom the communes can make application for help, and have their cases examined, considered, and decided upon. This help is given in many ways, in money, in implements, in the setting up of repairing shops, since the shortage of metals and combustibles does not allow of the manufacture of new implements, in seeds, and so on, the return made by the peasants being the corn raised and handed over to the State monopoly. The provision and improvement of *seeds* are in the hands of an organization under this Commissariat, which is above all interested in increasing the area of cultivation, which, since 1918, it has actually enlarged.

The Controller of Food Supplies governs the supply of the seed ; distribution of it is the care of the land committees. It seems that no instructions are given to the peasant as to what he shall or shall not grow ; it is assumed that, with his accumulated hereditary knowledge of his land, he knows best. But orders are given to the agricultural specialists employed to urge as strongly as possible modern methods of cultivation ; to maintain a close contact with the peasant, who is to be led to consider the specialist as his friend and adviser. To provide specialists, all agronomes, i.e. men provided with special agricultural knowledge, are called upon to register themselves and place themselves at the disposal of the land committees, on pain of being found guilty before

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the law. The Commissariat of Agriculture is covering the country with a network of *technical stations*, where work goes on in improving the class of seeds ; in breeding and improving the breed of cattle ; also of horses in State stud farms ; in quality of poultry ; in apiculture ; all of which is in close co-ordination with the farm communes, State farms, and with the peasants generally. Reports show that the peasants respond ; they apply for help, and begin to learn the value of modern technique in farming. Of this I had a more personal experience, to be described later. Already there are some 5,000 *communes* for collective farming, and an All-Russian Convention of these farmers has been held. *Of State domains* there are about 1,400 in the country, in size varying from 400 to 8,000 hectares. These were mostly the estates of former landowners, generally better organized and cultivated than the peasants' land ; they are now needed for a double purpose. They serve to intensify the production of the country, and they are demonstration farms, where the farmers can see the results of the improved technique which is recommended to them. One of the tasks of the Agricultural Commissariat is to investigate the application of electricity to agriculture, and it has experimental stations where commissions are working out the problem of electrical application.

The Sharing of Crops.—A good deal has been made of the taking of the crops by the Commissaries of the people, and of the results on the peasants, and I was careful in inquiry on the point. A certain norm is fixed and a sufficiency of corn is allowed for the needs of the farmer and his family, the transaction

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being settled by the Commissariat of Food which also regulates the reservation to be made for the supply of seed corn. The *balance* goes to the State monopoly in exchange either for goods or money. As the State is also the proprietor of all the industries, the nature of the transaction can be seen. The price paid is a fixed one made by the Food Control, which has to take into consideration the conditions prevailing in the locality—the cost of production, and the prices of industrial products in the district concerned. As the interview with the Food Control shows, the *full* balance has nowhere yet been secured ; much is hidden and held up with a view to possible speculation in prices.

The Attitude of the Peasants.—These were divided up into three groups—rich, middle, and poor. The rich peasant is hostile to the decrees and the policy of the Soviet. Any decrees which help the poorer peasants must to that extent hurt him, and besides, from the fixation of prices of produce he stands to lose more than others ; he can no longer safely speculate, hoard corn for a time of high prices, and hence his resentment. With the middling class peasant it is the policy of the Soviet to work in a spirit of friendly co-operation ; it is he who really counts most in the question of the peasantry. As for the poor peasant, it must be remembered that the Russian peasant is extremely susceptible to all that affects his ownership of land. He knows that he got land *after* the October Revolution ; in many parts of the country he has already been reminded by the “Whites” that wherever the power of the Soviets is overthrown, even temporarily, the rights and privileges of former land-

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owners are restored. More and more the poorer peasants are entering into the collective form of production ; when the Red Army passes they assist it with food ; they see that their interests are linked with the retention of Soviet power. It had previously been frankly confessed to me that there have been risings of peasants, and the cause was confessed with equal frankness. A year ago, in dire straits for food for the centre of Russia, owing to the blockade and the advancing ring of enemies, the Soviet had to send Commissaries and soldiers into the country to take the food. The necessity was great and something had to be done, but the doing of it gave great umbrage to the peasants concerned. It was this which produced the rising in the Simbirsk and Samara Governments.

The Chief Task of the Commissariat of Agriculture is the increase of the production of the soil in Russia. " We believe that can best be done by the collective working of the land, but we are not carrying through any forcible socialization of the land, we are not forcing any individual producer to enter any collective form of production. On the contrary, we try specially to preserve the individual freedom of the farmers, and land committees and other agents of the Soviet Government have received definite instructions to bring no pressure whatever to bear on any individual farmer to join any collective form of producing. We believe that the collective producer can only be valuable provided he has become convinced of the advantages of the collective process of production, and enters it consciously and willingly. And while we are trying to give to the peasants

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supplies of improved seeds, artificial manures, repairing shops, an improved breed of horses and cattle, fowls and bees—all that we are doing is embarrassed by the fact that so many workers are drawn off by war who would be better employed as producers or instructors.” The statement is so weighty that I give it in the words of the Commissary. It is a reply to the frequent criticism that the action of the Soviet Republic is nothing more than the thrusting of society into the communistic form by brute force. So far as I can see this is not true; they know how to concede, how to draw back and conciliate, and this statement by Sereda shows the same mental process at work in connection with the land.

Forestry.—The forests are immense, covering 150 millions of dessiatines, of which formerly 100 millions belonged to the Crown, 50 millions to private owners. They have been taken by the State and are worked. A general survey is being made of them by 2,000 surveyors and 3,000 expert foresters, the value of the wood settled, and the best way in which the forests can be exploited. The peasants are not restricted in the use of the forests, for the State has it at heart to support home industries, and for these wood is necessary. Besides which, it is forming “artels” —working associations—for the working of the forests, and is giving to them credits. At the same time the question of the forests has been brought before the Council of the People’s Commissaries, who in principle have *no objection to the granting of concessions of forests to outside people for exploitation.* With a last hint the interview closed, but this hint was significant. A law is to be passed assuring to any foreigners

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who wish to come and live in Russia as citizens land and the means to live. Preference will be given to those colonists who will undertake to work on a collective system, and it is expected that they will prove an advantage to the agricultural system of Russia, by bringing with them higher and better forms of production. The department of agriculture has its eyes wide open to any possibility of bringing improvement to the productiveness of Russia. This question of colonists shows it in one direction, and the network of stations, farms, and all kinds of establishments maintained through the length and breadth of the land, shows the same intense desire. I had been so impressed by the disclosure of the immense activity of this Commissariat, that I followed up the interview by going out some 20 versts into the country to inspect the nearest of these stations to Moscow. There are 600 of these farms, of which 170 are devoted to the improvement of the breed of horses, 90 of pigs, and the rest generally of cattle. They are controlled by a special sub-department of the Commissariat, and the director of this sub-department, a man of great ability, experience, and extraordinary full life, took me out to Veshki, where I passed the greater part of a day. It is a farm of 782 dessiatines, divided between plough and grasslands, for much is done in improving the quality of seeds, although Veshki has for its speciality the breeding of horses and cattle, and to some extent pigs. Of *horses* the farm possesses thirty-five, of which fourteen are mares and two are stallions of the Flemish type—Brabançons—three entire horses and two mares are of a lighter type for use in towns for carriage

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work generally; the rest are producing horses for farm work. The animals I saw are superb creatures, and of the produce of the farm I saw foals of one month, a month and a half, one and two years old, excellent specimens of careful breeding. The use of the horses is granted to the peasants, who bring their mares to the farm. Of *cows* Veshki specializes in two kinds, one a Swiss, closely resembling the Alderney cows, and the other a pure Russian, black with white face. One of the bulls is a pedigree beast, and there are in all eleven of them, mostly bred on the farm. They are housed, like the herd of cows, in a byre of modern, hygienic construction which is in itself a lesson to the peasants. The stabling for the horses, though good, is of older construction and is to be replaced by newer premises. The milk of the herd of cows is sent into Moscow to the Food Control, for children and invalids. In *pigs*, little is done here, but a beginning has been made with English pigs of Yorkshire breed, which are preferred. The establishment formerly belonged to a society for breeding cattle; it was taken over by the Soviet and its province extended. And if one multiplies the activity of Veshki by 600, the number of special stations, one has a glimpse of what is being done by the Soviet in scientific *improvement* of matters relating to the land. The stations are a living lesson to the peasants, who can use the studs kept on them, and can buy at cost price from them the cattle and horses bred there. And this extension of agricultural demonstration, its elaborate and minute organization, and its direction by competent experts, is the work of the Soviet Government. The establish-

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ment contains 184 people, including women and children, all living here. Its head is a fine specimen of a young farmer from Podolia, very intelligent, and speaking both French and German. He has an assistant and also a representative of the Workmen's Committee as special helpers, and there is also the usual workmen's committee. I was intensely curious about the working of this committee, for I know something of agricultural conditions and of agricultural labourers and of farmers in England. I learned that it consists of five members, with two deputies chosen to act in case of illness of any of the five. It has as its special province to look after the working discipline of the farm ; to see that the conditions laid down for labour are observed ; to look after the housing, food, cultural work, and health of the labourers. But the manager can act on his own discretion on all special questions relating to the farm. It is he who can decide them without reference to the workmen. Knowing something of the difficulties that arise in the management of a farm, I thought that a beneficial reservation ; but on the subject of the committee I pressed the manager still further. He confessed that its value depended entirely on the intelligence of the men, that many were incapable of acting on it with any good effect, but that in spite of the varieties of intelligence represented the system really acts, that the men learn through it and their intelligence is increased. In proof of this he mentioned the case of a Soviet milk farm which we had passed on our way out. The manager had been there for twenty-eight years, and on the place being taken over by the Soviet he decided to remain. He now

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prefers the system of workmen's committees. The manager of Veshki seems confident of the good that comes from the work of the farm, and regretted humorously that he could not show me the difference between the rye grown on the farm and that grown by neighbouring peasants—because he said “this year they are using our seed.” And our road to Veshki had taken us through a farm commune—a collectively worked number of farms—on which the crops were heavy and good, in striking contrast to others I had seen in the country.

VI

BOLSHEVISM AND LABOUR

INTERVIEW WITH SCHMIDT, COMMISSARY OF LABOUR

THIS Commissariat is one of the most important, and as in the Soviet Republic the working classes hold the supreme power, it was urgent to discover what action they had taken concerning themselves, not as governors, but as workmen.

The Commissariat does not lack work. It is concerned with the enrolment and distribution of labour throughout Russia ; with the fixing of hours of work ; with making the tariffs according to which workers are paid ; with the protection of labour (factory inspection) ; with the support of the worker during temporary inability to work (insurance against sickness, disablement, complete or partial, accident or temporary unemployment) ; with pensions. It thus combines the functions of Labour Exchanges, Factory Inspectors, and National Insurance with us, with many other functions, which require the action, with us, of Parliament, or of the trades' unions themselves. The basis of this Labour Commissariat is

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the Professional Alliances (Unions by industries), from which the Commissariat is built up. A college of nine is formed, of which five members are the representatives elected by the National Council of Professional Alliances, four being appointed by the Commissaries of the People, though even here the Professional Alliances have the right to challenge these appointments if they see fit. Laws to be passed concerning labour are first passed through the National Council of Professional Alliances, then sent to the Commissariat of Labour to be ratified or condemned; if ratified, to be promulgated as law.

This constitution of the Commissariat ensures that the men who are making plans for labour are competent for the task, men who are experts in their own branch, while the elective system ensures the active personal participation of all the workers.

Hours of Labour.—As at present fixed, are eight hours daily for workers, and six hours daily for employés in offices. In trades that are dangerous to health—mines, gas factories—the day is six hours long; in the tobacco industry seven hours. Overtime is not provided for, but owing to the stringency of present conditions a concession of two hours per day has been allowed, the pay being one and a half times the ordinary pay. *In Night Work* the period is seven hours on a shift, but neither women nor the young workers are allowed to work on night shifts.

The age at which work may begin is sixteen, and it is hoped later on to raise it. From sixteen to eighteen years of age a six hours' day is fixed, and no working of overtime is allowed. If the sixteen to

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eighteen years' old workers do the same kind of work as the older, they get the same pay ; working six hours they get paid for eight hours. The remaining two hours of an eight hours' day must be spent in schools that are specially arranged for the workers' improvement under Lunacharsky's scheme. As a temporary measure, due to the conditions obtaining in this war-time, it has been permitted for youths from fourteen to sixteen years of age to work for four hours per day, but only in those trades which are not prejudicial to health. The shop committees control the schools.

These provisions for continued school instruction are an improvement on American vocational schools, where the full eight hours' day must first be passed in the factory.

Rest.—Every worker is entitled to forty-two hours' rest a week, that is really one week-end ; and after a year's work he can further claim a month's holiday with full pay. This at present is reduced to two weeks owing to war conditions, but even here workers in dangerous trades receive the full month's holiday.

Tariffs of Pay.—These have been worked out entirely for the various industries by each National Committee of the particular Professional Alliance (Industrial Union). The tariff has to pass through the National Council of Professional Alliances, and be presented to the Commissariat of Labour, which has to determine how far it is in accord with the general policy of the Soviet Government. The National Council of the Professional Alliances, when each tariff passes its control, has to determine whether

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it harmonizes with regulations worked out by other Professional Alliances. Tariffs are changed from time to time as soon as the Tariff Committee of the National Council finds that the cost of living is in excess of pay.

Social Insurance is an important section of the work of the Commissariat. In the interview with Melnichansky I have described how a fund was raised with which to begin operations. I now learned that the system is non-contributory, the fund being maintained by a 25 per cent. grant of the full amount of the wages sheet made by the State, or by the private employer where the industry is not nationalized; more being paid if the trade is hurtful to health.

This social insurance covers the whole life of the worker—sickness, invalidity, unemployment, accident, old age pensions, and maternity. In cases of complete loss of ability to work, accident or maternity, full wages are paid. In the case of maternity the period lasts for eight weeks before and eight weeks after the birth of the child.

In cases of partial disability the amount paid varies according to the percentage of disability.

Pensions for total disability, or invalidity, or old age, vary in amount according to the average wages of the trade in the locality concerned; but where special treatment or care is required, an addition is made according to the medical requirements on the recommendation of a special committee which examines the cases.

A factory worker on reaching the age of fifty automatically receives a pension, but other workers

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in less exhausting occupations must, at sixty, present themselves before a special committee, which decides to what extent they are pensionable. Should they be thought to retain 50 per cent. of their energy, they still work; but if less, then they are fully pensioned. This, I was told, is a temporary measure due to the stringency of the time, and the shortage of hands; it is not intended to be permanent. Every consideration is paid by the Commissariat to the conditions of labour, and efforts are made to reduce the damage to health, by introducing new processes, when these are within the means of the Commissariat. All matters of sanitary value in the *housing* of the worker come also within the scope of its powers, and it has the task of passing all plans for new buildings for workers. Their effort in requisitioning houses of the rich and apportioning the rooms as a temporary measure to meet the very great requirements of the workers is one of the things that has been strongly criticized. I myself lived in a room in such a house, which shelters now, instead of two people, a dozen workers of the Soviet. There are not enough big buildings to house all the workers. Most of them are far away from the factories, but still all of them are inhabited by workers.

Factory Inspection is now conducted by the workers themselves, the Professional Alliances are choosing and training men from among themselves who control thus the industries for the department of the Protection of Labour, a special part of the Commissariat. They are charged with seeing that regulations concerning hours and social insurance are observed, with taking children away from

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work—in short, with the full duties of a factory inspector.

The Enrolment and Distribution of labour is solely in the hands of this Commissariat, which alone has the right of supplying labour. Formerly the Labour Exchanges were made up of representatives of professional unions and of municipalities. These have been re-formed into departments of registration and distribution, acting through committees formed of representatives sent by the various Professional Alliances. When there was much unemployment, Labour Exchanges were needed. Since there is shortness of hands they were re-organized as “Enrolment and Distribution Committees,” which are also formed by committees of the alliances. The “Enrolment and Distribution Committee” has to enrol every citizen and see to it that he shall work. When an exigency arises there shall not be any idlers. They register all labour; they supply all labour as applications are received from the factories requiring it, though, as a temporary measure, in the case of the more responsible workers, such as engineers, permission is given to factories to *invite* workers; but once such an appointment is made, it is registered under the particular trade to which it belongs.

The Commissariat has thus complete control of the labour market, and is able to eliminate competition, that is the competition which is represented by men fighting for a job, or trying to undersell one another.

At this point Melnichansky came in, and the interview became a discussion of the system of labour

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control in its relation to a fully developed socialistic system. It was extremely interesting, and produced some useful information. The general tariff of pay, which runs from 600 roubles a month for the lowest, up to 3,000 a month for the highest, is looked upon only as a transition. Each revision of the tariff will aim at reducing the difference between the highest and lowest. The general tariff will be changed from the 1st of September, 1919—the lowest wage being 1,200 roubles, the highest 4,800. But even now 3,000 roubles a month is not the highest wage paid. In cases where specialists are required and men are invited to fill the posts whose services are worth to the State more than 3,000 roubles a month, they are paid more, if approved by a special committee of the People's Commissaries, who have to consider the cases fully and decide on the advantage of paying the higher sum. This, again, appears to me to be one of those numerous cases in which the system during its early stages has been cut and carved to meet difficult circumstances. Concessions are made at present in order to ensure the future success of the socialistic principle. I mentioned the usual criticism of socialism—its destructive effect on emulation, reducing all to one level. But the tariffs provide for grouping the workers according to the intelligence required in their work, with corresponding differences of pay, and, the competition for bread gone, for the minimum wage and the certainty of employment have killed that, there remains a competition of interest in work. This, with the opportunities given for study and cultivation, results in the improvement of the worker, who

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changes his group and advances in the scale. I was assured that this is already going on, and that so far from being killed, inventiveness is being stimulated and hidden talent developed.

These men look on the system of labour control not as a dead weight on culture, but as a direct stimulus towards it. And no one could mistake the genuine emotion with which Melnichansky compared the position of the worker under the Soviet Republic with his own life in the United States, where he was a mechanic in the metal industry, or with which he pointed out the consciousness of opportunity that has come to the Russian worker who pants and strains to improve himself and reach a full mental development. These men are sincere, their emotion is sincere, and their statements are confirmed in many cases by what I myself have *seen*. The Russian, fundamentally patient and gentle, possesses an extraordinary character capable of intense enthusiasm and great efforts, and it would seem that the change of régime, the new freedom, has produced a wave of conscious, not vague, enthusiasm, for cultivation of his own capacities, and for use of his new opportunities, which has already produced much and looks like being enduring.

VII

TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

TRADES' Unions are here called Professional Alliances, they embrace not single and local trades, but whole industries. At the offices of the Moscow Council of Professional Alliances I saw the Secretary, Melnichansky, who discoursed freely on this side of Soviet life, and answered all my questions with the greatest ease. As Secretary of this huge organization, I imagine he is in the right place. He is soaked in his subject, and had no need to consult any note or book during the three hours the interview lasted.

The building where I found him in the centre of Moscow is so striking, both in itself and in the contrast between its present and its past, that it deserves a word to itself. This Labour Temple (the building of the Moscow Alliances or Unions), as it now is, is the former palace for the meetings of the nobility, an immense building containing suites of offices and a vast marble staircase leading up to a gallery surrounding two sides of a magnificent hall, where fêtes used to be given to the Tsar when he visited Moscow.

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It is, perhaps, the largest hall in Russia ; a noble oblong of great height, finely proportioned. The sides are lined with white marble pillars supporting the cornice, behind them are two wide promenades, above them is a gallery which runs round three sides. The old lustres remain, and the lighting is continued by a concealed fringe of small lights behind the edge of the cornice.

My imagination quickly peopled it with a glittering throng of courtiers and nobles, splendid in dresses, jewels and orders, and contrasted it violently with its present use, filled with chairs for the meeting of conventions, a big platform at the further end. It can be made to hold from 3,000 to 4,000 persons, and I thought that the workers of the Soviet Republic can congratulate themselves on having as a home perhaps the largest, and certainly the most splendid and significant hall in the world. It was given to them by the Government after the October Revolution. Its condition was dirty and unkempt, for it had been used during the Great War as work-rooms for the making of uniforms. But the workers cleaned it, and in some places altered its decoration themselves, and in the suite of rooms forming a long gallery the scutcheons of nobility in the wall panels are replaced by shields bearing the emblems of the Republic, the Professional Alliances, and various trades, modelled in plaster. And in the centre room of the gallery, where formerly were pictures and emblems of the Russian generals of the Napoleonic period, on walls and ceiling are now simple red panels, against two of which are busts of Marx and Lenin, resembling, but not particularly fine works of art.

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In the part of the building given up to offices is a fine circular council chamber, the meeting-place of the nobility, where the very chairs bear witness to the former character of the place, for on their backs are the heraldic emblems of former occupants.

The contrast between past and present is almost stupefying, yet is so full of meaning, so indicative of things that are happening here (where Commissaries of the People are lodged in the Kremlin itself) and in Russia generally, that it is worthy of careful note.

Melnichansky's lucid explanation of the Trades' Union system under the Soviet I shall try to reproduce as clearly as I can.

There is a difference between the Russian form of organization and the English, where men are members of local and special unions according to trades; or the I.W.W., which runs a general mixed organization. Russian workers are organized by industries, as metal, wood, textile industries, embracing all trades. Thus the Metal Workers' Union takes in some 290 trades. But all are united in one central organization—the All-Russian Council of Professional Alliances. There are thirty Professional Alliances, which unite all trades by the industries in which they are employed. In most of the cities (1) they are organized by localities; (2) they are then united by Provincial Councils; (3) these are connected by National Councils. There are thirty National Councils, which are united by the All-Russian Council of Professional Alliances. This, omitting the part of the Ukraine, which is at present in the hands of Denikin, rules some 3½ million members. This organization has been largely

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developed by the Soviet régime, for at the February Revolution there were only three trades' unions in Moscow ; but at the time of the October Revolution all trades here had been organized, and the present all-embracing system evolved.

This conclusion seems to have been a natural one. The Revolution of February was a purely political one ; the Tsar had been got rid of, but the condition of the workers remained unchanged, and this political character was retained by the Kerensky Government. Strikes were in progress in Moscow and all over Russia to secure advanced wages in order to meet the stringency of food prices. Nearer to the period of September and October it was evident that strikes should be avoided. A little consideration showed that they would be to the advantage of the masters, whose sources of profit, war orders, had dried up, and who would have welcomed the strikes. Two months before the October Revolution it was seen that the only thing for workers to do was to fight the Provisional Government and secure Government by Soviet, which would be able to change the condition of the workers in relation to the changed economical condition of the country.

It would also produce the effect of giving each worker a direct interest in the governing body, in its elections. For every man is a member of some alliance (union), which elects its own member to the Soviet. At the same time it elects the Executive Committee of the Alliance, which, in turn, elects its members to the Soviet, at least two, at most five, according to the numerical status of the members of the Alliance.

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There is thus a direct participation in the Government, both of the alliance and of the country, for the members are elected by and from the workers. The Soviet, though superior to the organizations of the Alliances, who require its approval before their conclusions can become law, can thus devote itself to the political development of the country, while the Executive Committees can care for the conditions of the industries they represent, and through the Central Organization of the Alliances, for the economical development of the country.

A question regarding *rates of pay* brought information concerning *strikes*. These are not recognized. Indeed, one must confess they would be illogical—you do not strike against yourself. Formerly, he said, strike-breakers were considered as traitors to the cause of the workers; now it is strikers or people wishing to strike who are the traitors. In other countries strikes were and are the only weapon in the workers' hands for securing a change of conditions. Here, on the contrary, the various Alliances have Tariff Committees, who follow the movement of prices, and, where necessary, work out plans for changing the rate of wages. These plans are passed through the Central Council, thence through the Soviet, and so become law.

On Hours of Labour and Rates of Pay I have already spoken in "Bolshevism and Labour."

Unemployment and Sickness have been tackled by the Alliances with success, though Melnichansky frankly admitted their early difficulties, both in creating a fund and in finding out ways of distribution. His frankness was but a repetition of what I have

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constantly found—the readiness to admit mistakes and blunders, and to confess the difficulty of finding successful ways and methods of action under conditions of great stress. The school of experience of the leaders of the Bolsheviks has been a hard one, but they have profited by it.

They got over their difficulty of raising a fund for insuring the worker against sickness and unemployment by requiring the proprietors of factories, all of whom had done sufficiently well out of the war period, to pay to a Central Committee elected by the Alliances a sum equal to 4 per cent. of the total wages paid by them, which provided a fund against unemployment; and a further sum equal to 10 per cent. of the wages sheet, which formed the fund against sickness. In this way a fund was formed sufficiently large to begin operations, which were the more necessary because of the disorganization of industry and the unemployment caused by the stoppage of the intense production caused by the war.

A payment by the proprietors of wages for three months to their employés who were not needed was decreed, but on the plan that it should really be paid only for half that period, the payment for the other half being made to the Central Committee to strengthen its funds. It was argued that the Russian factory worker, being in most cases connected with a village, would in six weeks, if he had not secured work, have returned to his village. Unemployment generally is a thing unknown in the Soviet Republic; in cases of workmen being out of work, they are fitted with employment by the appropriate State Department. But in the case of any fortuitous stoppage of a

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factory, through, say, want of fuel, as has occasionally occurred, this being a completely abnormal state of things, the workmen's pay is continued by the State. For sickness special committees elected by the workers' Alliances cater. They provide the clinics, the medical advisers, and the medicaments. But wider affairs of a national kind, tuberculosis and the like, are cared for by the State Department of Hygiene, on whom devolves the duty of providing the necessary sanatoria, advice and treatment. Melnichansky remarked that it had recently been said in the West that there was neither freedom of speech nor Press nor meeting for the workers and Professional Alliances under the Soviet. In the great hall I had just seen he said they had quite recently called a convention of Factory Committees, which, after discussion, had elected a Central Committee to organize the best way of distributing all supplies of food and clothing in Moscow. A clear proof of freedom of speech and initiative, anyway, for it was quite an untrammelled convention. As for the freedom of the Press amongst the workers, the dearth of paper causes curtailment, but he gave me a copy of an excellent monthly issued by the Central Committee, and of a weekly paper, distributed everywhere and devoted to the professional interests of the workers. Besides these, every Professional Alliance has its own monthly. In these the fullest discussion is permitted. As for freedom of meeting one might say it is an integral part of the system, but not during working hours. They are devoted to work, not talk, and if meetings must be held it must be outside the time allotted to work, in the workers' own time.

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Meetings of the Sovietists are held every week for the discussion of political and economic topics, in which the leaders take part—for never did any people so well understand the power of propaganda, the spoken word, as these. And I myself have seen on the walls of Moscow notices of a Menshevik meeting, a proof that toleration is exercised, so long as it does not lead to counter-revolutionary activities.

Questioned as to the relation between his organization and the civil war, he declared that the efforts of the Soviet to give to the proletariat the simple rights of a man, to the worker a home, an income, and leisure, to the peasant land and the right to cultivate it, were destroyed at once in those parts captured by Denikin, who carried on ruthless war against all Sovietists, and reduced immediately the worker and the peasant to their former condition. The Professional Alliances on their part were helping—they made a voluntary mobilization of the workers from time to time, sending 10 per cent. of their members into the army; in parts of the country nearer to the fronts raising this to 50 per cent., and even at the front itself mobilizing the whole. Women workers were equally subject to this mobilization, taking up work for the Red Cross Service. He himself, after spending some time in the work of this Central Organization, would depart for a period of service at the front, returning afterwards to resume for another period his official duties.

Conditions vary very much, according to him, in different parts of the interior, and are likely to continue so until the chance of putting into practice there the very real constructive ability shown in the

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great towns has been given. Up to the present this reconstruction in the interior has had to go side by side with the destructive activity at the frontiers.

In conclusion he said, "You can see that we are not the monsters the Western World persists in describing us. I lived for six and a half years in New York, and other cities of the United States, a political refugee. My home was in the Bronx, and in spite of the violent nightly illumination of New York, I never went home from a meeting in the Bowery without keeping a watchful eye in case of attack. Here in Moscow we have no lights at night, yet you can cross the city in any direction at any time of the night with perfect safety."

He further said that only a revolutionary Government could have produced such an effect. Its drastic measures, shooting at sight, were directed against the hooligans and bandits who came out in the social chaos to rob and kill. And he declared that the bulk of the shooting of which the world has heard so much was of people of this kind.

Whatever they may have been, I can confirm, not only from others' testimony, but from personal experience, Melnichansky's description of the order existing in Sovietic Moscow.

VIII

THE BOLSHEVIK SYSTEM OF FOOD CONTROL

INTERVIEW WITH SVIDERSKI, A MEMBER OF THE COLLEGIUM OF FOOD CONTROL

THIS interview was for me one of the clearest and most convincing. Sviderski is a master of his subject in all its details, and the clearness of his replies, together with the sequential character of his statement, made him impressive. But most striking of all were the evidences of the minute care which has been devoted to the problem of feeding the people, and the elaborately strong organization which had been set up. Of its results in actual experience I can speak myself. There is in some parts, as I found at Ostrov, and among some sections of the population, difficulty in living. But the net result is, to me, a great problem tackled under conditions of appalling difficulty, and conquered, to a large and steadily increasing extent. In this matter the honours are on the side of the Bolsheviks.

The Soviet came into power in November 1917,

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and the first question which it had to settle was whether it should allow open bargaining, free trade in products, or not. There was a great lack of products of prime necessity, with a consequent enormous rise in prices, and under the Kerensky Government it had been decided to maintain a monopoly of corn. The Soviet decided to use this as a beginning of its system of monopolies, the chief feature of its policy; for corn was of the first importance, and in comparison any other thing was of minor importance.

This policy, the fixing of prices for corn, meant difficulties in a country of peasant farmers, but the policy of the open market was out of the question. It would make the stocking of corn by the State impossible, and, further, it would allow the moneyed class, the bourgeoisie, to buy in the speculative market, while the workers would get nothing. So the Soviet was faced with the task of building up on the ruins of the old private purchasing power, and what was left of the apparatus for purchasing of the Provisional Government, a new apparatus for purchasing on a much larger scale.

The Apparatus.—The apparatus of the Kerensky Government employed 100–150,000 people. These were taken over, though, like most of the officials of the former régimes, they were guilty of sabotage. The machine of Food Control now employs about 200,000 people all over the country, and the method of their employment is another example of the minute care with which the governing departments are organized.

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Thus there are 800 *responsible* workers distributed over the provinces who have been trained and practised for six months under the Soviet Government to take charge of provincial departments, etc. The Food Control department further employs 400 *groups of agitators* of twenty-five people each, men and women, drawn from the provinces which are not self-supporting in the matter of corn, or as the Russian has it "have no bread." These travelling squads of agitators move about the country working on the minds of the peasants and indoctrinating them with the idea of the duty of setting free their surplus corn for use by others. This is a necessary proceeding, for the peasant is, as a rule, unwilling to part with his corn, and the Soviet prefers to proceed by suasion, though, when faced with a refusal to deliver corn, by law it can be requisitioned. For this latter job an army of 40,000 men and officers has been formed, whose duty is to enforce the law regarding surplus corn.

The Normal Process of obtaining this Corn is in exchange for goods or money. From the Supreme Council of National Economics—the controllers of all Russian industries—the Food Control Department receives goods, already valued and inventoried, which are distributed by its local organs through the co-operative societies among the peasants in exchange for corn. In 1918 1½ billions of roubles' worth of goods were distributed in this way at fixed prices. For the *control* of the apparatus of Food Supply there exists a Travelling Labour Section, consisting of 300 workers, chosen by the various Professional Alliances.

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Results of the System of Food Control.—From November 1917 to August 1918 the apparatus of the Commissariat was not yet perfected, and only 80 million poods of corn could be stocked, an amount representing about one-tenth of the needs for the same period. But from August 1918 to August 1919 the Department had already been able to secure 108 million poods, or about 40 per cent. of the needs, which for the period were about 225 million poods (the pood is 36 English lb.)

None of these 108 million poods of corn was purchased under duress. The presence of a detachment of the requisitioning army mentioned above was always sufficient to cause sales to proceed smoothly, though when these detachments were not present the quantities of corn sold by the peasants would be smaller than their legal due. The only requisitions actually made were from private persons who were removing by rail, speculatively, larger quantities of flour than was allowed.

The extraordinary way in which the well-to-do Russian peasant, in spite of his ignorance and lack of culture, responds to the varying political situation is seen in the fact that when the position on the war fronts grows worse or serious these peasants all over the interior deliver less. They look upon Koltchak as meaning for them a free speculative market, and hold back their stocks hoping for high prices. On the taking of Tcheliabinsk from Koltchak, on the other hand, food stocks *came in at once*.

Field of Operations.—These 108 million poods stocked between August 1918—August 1919 were got from a territory on which only eight governments,

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and those the least productive, raise corn. From those eight governments in pre-war times statistics show that only 60 million poods of corn were exported yearly by private persons, while from the same provinces between January 1917 and July 1918 (a period covering the last months of Tsarism) 75 million poods were drawn. But the Soviet Government from January 1919–July 1919 got 46 million poods of corn from them—a great advance. Of course, during the past year there has been an absolute deficiency in the return of corn for the whole territory held by the Soviet, not including Ukrainia, where no stocks were made. It is estimated at 40 million poods. Further, the 108 million poods of corn obtained represent only 48 *per cent. of the available surplus*, the remaining 52 *per cent.* being hidden or used for purposes of speculation. The Food Control has therefore only been able to alleviate, not to satisfy, the needs of the population for bread, and it was natural that the Professional Alliances should call for preferential treatment of the workers in the provision of food, since moneyed non-workers could buy at speculative rates. *And it was only after the evidence of this that the famous categories—classes for food distribution—were drawn up.* But the experiences of 1918–1919 show that the peasants are already considering the delivery of corn as a duty, they are becoming accustomed to the new régime, and the realization of the present harvest will take place under more favourable conditions. These arise partly from the conviction of the peasants that Koltchak will not be able to provide them with a

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speculative market, partly from the fact that the Soviet Government will be purchasing over a larger territory — always excepting Ukraina. The Red Army, in defeating Koltchak, has set free the provinces of Samara, Saratof, Orenburg, Ufa, and partly Ouralsk, which were formerly occupied, but from which purchases can now be made.

In fact, could the whole national surplus be secured, the Soviet Government would have a surplus of somewhere about 30 million poods over its needs. And even if in purchasing it secures no more than its previous proportional rates, it will get from 250–300 million poods of corn, and *the needs of the country will be satisfied.*

THE CATEGORIES.—Soldiers are outside the categories altogether. The men of the “Red” armies at the front receive $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread daily (600 grammes), when in the rear 1 lb. daily.

The First Category consists of workers, the heads of departments and all responsible workers; these receive $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread daily (200 grammes). This was changed when I was there to $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. daily.

The Second Category comprises all Soviet employés, who receive $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. daily (100 grammes). Changed to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

The Third Category is for non-workers. Their portion is $\frac{1}{8}$ lb. daily (50 grammes). Changed to $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

Children up to the age of Sixteen Years, quite irrespective of any other consideration, are given $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of bread daily, free of charge. There have been times when no bread could be given out. And even this July, owing to the breakdown of a large

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mill, there were two weeks when in some districts of Moscow no bread could be distributed, though the smaller mills provided sufficient for some of the proletarian districts. In Petrograd there has been no discontinuance. In addition to the special regulations for children, the families of "Red" soldiers will receive food as on the first category, and some things will be gratuitous. While, as the rouble has undergone steady depreciation, in buying from the peasants the former price of corn which was 18 roubles a pood was on August 12 advanced to 60 roubles, though the selling price for bread will remain as before.

Articles under Control are bread, sugar, salt, fish, butter both vegetable and animal, meat, eggs, tobacco, matches, tea, coffee, and sweetmeats. Textile fabrics, ready-made clothes, shoes, oils for burning. All these are distributed on coupons, and on the first list all from bread down to eggs, inclusively, retain a fixed price for the whole year.

The Actual State Monopolies are at present meat, salted fish, salt, sugar, tea, and bread. Other products are being purchased by the State, and at the same time, with the permission of the Food Control Department, by co-operative organizations. It is intended to extend the State monopoly to potatoes and all kinds of fats in the autumn. "It is important that the policy of Food Control should coincide with the communistic programme, and should serve as a sound economic basis for the Red Republic. But, it must be observed, that as a result of the world-conflagration as affecting Russia, no other policy would secure to the working masses

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even their minimum needs. Ukrainia furnishes an example. The Food Commissariats of Ukrainia indulged in a policy of compromise, tolerating the free purchase of corn in a zone of 50 versts round the cities of Kharkov, Kieff, and Ekaterinoslav. As a consequence they were able to purchase in six months in the whole Ukrainia under Soviet rule only five million poods of corn, and they were unable to supply a sufficient minimum ration to the workers of the three towns and the miners of the Donetz basin. Through this the powers of resistance to Denikin of these workers were lowered. It is now agreed by the Ukrainian Government that any purchases made in future will be made on the plan adopted in the Great Russian Soviet Republic. Finally, said Svidersky, a complete and satisfactory solution of the food problem—a full supply of bread and fats—will only be possible when the victory over Koltchak and Denikin is complete.”

IX

TRANSPORT : A VITAL NERVE OF RUSSIA

RECENT events in England must have convinced even the most unreflecting observer that the life of the country depends on these two things, transport and food supply, and that on the functioning of the first the success of the second largely hangs. It is still more true of a country like Russia, and to-day truer than ever. With masses of people in the large towns, while the food-producing districts are enormous distances away, with many parts in north and west unable even in normal times to supply their own wants in food, it can readily be imagined that the effective working of the transport system was the question above all others for the Bolsheviks. If that failed, then all failed.

From the first moment that I got into Russia I set myself to observe as closely as possible the working of the railway system as I passed through, and I continued the observation on the expeditions I made out of Moscow. In Moscow itself I sought out the Commissary for Transport and questioned him closely on the condition of his department, his difficulties, and, if any, his success. As he is a man

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of an unusual type I got a frank discussion of the question.

The Great War had completely disorganized the Russian railway system. Apart from the actual waste which war always causes there was the working of the locomotives till the last ounce of their effectiveness was exhausted, the absence of repairs, and the lack of spare parts, for Russia relied largely on her Western neighbours and supplies were stopped. To these must be added the loss by destruction and damage of wagons. The director of the Dviegatl Wagon Works at Reval, an establishment employing in normal times some 5,000 men and working almost entirely for the Russian market, told me that he estimated the loss of wagons by Russia during the war at 600,000. If all these things be added together, a picture can be formed of the damaged, exhausted, and destroyed condition of railway transport in Russia at the March Revolution, 1917.

On top of the condition I have described there was added, as intervention in Russian affairs grew pronounced and a ring of enemies formed around the country, a further difficulty in the absence of fuel. The Donetz basin in the south, the great source of coal, was cut off; so was Baku, from which they drew their oil. Motor transport, as second string, was therefore impossible, and indeed it is reduced to the strict necessities of official locomotion, no private motor-driven vehicle being allowed.

Instead of coal or oil or petrol as combustible, only wood is used, with the double disadvantage of the difficulty of procuring it and bringing it to

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the spot where it is wanted, and of the lessening of the effective power of the engines that burn it.

Apart from the railway and motors there remains only horse transport. And, to anyone who knows the condition of Russian roads and the distances to be travelled, any question of horse transport except for short stages from the towns is absurd. Besides the ordinary movement of civilian travellers, which is by no means stopped, there is the transport of food, the supply of raw materials to the factories and the movement of goods when made, the furnishing of the towns with wood fuel, and, above all, the colossal military transport of men, munitions, food, to all points of the compass, and the necessity of transporting the débris of war, wounded men, hospital trains—all the paraphernalia of a great war on top of the urgent necessities of the civilian population, to be served by a depleted and exhausted railway system. The problem was terrific, and could only be faced, not to say solved, by someone of colossal energy who was willing to sacrifice himself. And that man is Leonid Krassin. There is here no question of politics—it is simply the meeting of a great need by the skill and energy of a competent man.

He is a Siberian, in the prime of life, about forty-eight years old, a highly skilled technician who was formerly the general manager for all the Russias of the Siemens-Schuckert Company. He sparkles with fiery energy, but his dark hair and full beard are becoming grey, and his face is lined with the tension under which he lives and works. And, speaking of him purely as a railway administrator, it seems to me that he

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has accomplished the almost impossible. For the transport system works and replies with tolerable success to the calls upon it. The military requirements, and they are immense, are met ; the factories are still working, partly, either in the manufacture of munitions or in their own speciality ; food is brought to the towns and is despatched to the furthest corners of the country in the quantities that are possible ; and still, though depleted, passenger traffic is maintained. This last is, naturally, best between the great towns, and one train each way, with passenger carriages, is run daily. Apart from that, people ride in the goods wagons, travelling just as the soldiers do. Whether it is they have been out buying food or doing business, the numbers who wish to travel seem greater than ever. Trains, of whatever kind they may be, are always packed like an egg, and I have constantly seen people riding on the steps, platforms, and even, with true Russian nonchalance, on the tops of carriages. But they travel.

The permanent way as I saw it in the west and in the neighbourhood of Moscow is in good condition, likewise the stations, though I saw some which bore the marks of fighting ; carriages are kept fairly clean, but there is little lighting at night. For sleeping, one lies on the bare seats, or the bunks, or, as nearly always happens, on the floor in carriage or corridor. The immense goods wagons are used for transporting soldiers as in the Great War, and most of those used are in fairly good condition, others roughly mended, and in sidings it was common to see others again broken down.

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Krassin's difficulties were great. In the early days of the transformation of the workmen's conditions it was well-nigh impossible to get anything done, or any line to function properly. But, he said, he refused to take the post unless he could be master. And, bit by bit, he has reduced the chaos to something like order, has leashed the political Commissaries who worked side by side with his technicians and engineers, and has, in some measure, provided for the vital wants of the country. Alexinsky, whom I interviewed at Reval, is bitterly anti-Bolshevik, but he expressed much the same opinion of the service in the north, and called Krassin a competent administrator.

This vital nerve, though not healthy, is yet not mortally attacked.

X

EDUCATION AND ART UNDER THE BOLSHEVIKS

AS one whose life has been spent largely in educational work of all kinds, I was naturally keen to discover the attitude of the present Russian Government towards education. Russia is a mass of illiteracy and ignorance greater than any other part of Europe, and on the treatment of this problem the final stability of any Government will depend. The importance of education was fully recognized in the great French Revolution, and I wondered to what extent the leaders of this last Revolution had realized the deadly seriousness of the issue. Accordingly I took an early opportunity of seeking out Lunacharsky, the Commissary for Education, and followed this by talking on more than one occasion with Professor Pokrovsky, the historian, who is Assistant Commissary.

Lunacharsky is one of the few Commissaries who live in the Kremlin, and I waited for him in what was a veritable king's ante-chamber, with its stately ornamentation and furniture, and—a sign of the times—a woman clerk with a typewriter. He is

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a man of middle age (most of the Commissaries seem to be verging on the fifties), dark in hair and complexion, extremely energetic, and, as I soon discovered, full of enthusiasm for his work. It is something novel to discover an educational director who retains a contagious enthusiasm for the matter of his department, with a wide vision of its possibilities, and who has at the same time a certain practical skill in administration. I ought to add that Lunacharsky is also, among a crowd of practised speakers, one of the best and most persuasive Bolshevik orators, no mean additional qualification for the task set him.

There can be no doubt at all that the Bolsheviks are fully aware of the seriousness of the Russian educational problem and of its importance for their ideas, system, and life. They have tackled it with a largeness of vision that is striking. They are aiming at removing the illiteracy of the peasants and bringing the folk-school into direct contact with village life, at providing classes and courses in technical and artistic instruction for the workers, at the foundation of a popular university system which will, if the former universities hold aloof, do to a large extent what these should have done, at cherishing the old schools of artistic culture in ballet, theatre, and painting—in a word, at meeting what seems to be springing up in Russia to-day, a wave of intense desire for instruction of all kinds, which, if carefully treated, may produce results of the very first value for Russia and for the world at large. Strange as it may appear, it is recognized that your ignorant citizen is a national danger, and that one

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of the first duties of the State is to help in removing his ignorance.

In 1911 I was in Moscow visiting educational institutions, and, indeed, one Zemstvo school in a neighbouring village still contains English pictures which I sent as a memento of my visit. While there I discovered that a society which had been formed for the purpose of assisting the scholars of the village schools with simple, decent reading-books and help in the teaching of arithmetic, all at the society's expense, had just been suppressed, and its members were subjected to every form of vilification and persecution, public and private, that it is possible to conceive. A further effort to establish a club-house and library, to which village teachers could come in their holidays and study and improve their knowledge of town life, was struggling against the opposition of the authorities. As between 1911 and 1919, the honours are therefore with the Bolsheviks.

Money has been voted freely. The six months' Budget seemed colossal till the buying power of the rouble was considered, but even then it was very large, and provided amply for the demands of the Commissariat. The first practical step was in the direction of village education. And here sound sense led the operations. Efforts were made to bring the peasants themselves into the educational movement, to catch and keep their interest. For this the school was made into a "working school," in which, in addition to the instruction in the processes of reading, writing, and arithmetic, the school work was brought into relation with all the opera-

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tions of village life. What that means is best understood by those who have lived in the villages and have seen the multiplicity of operations which villagers, who have largely to suffice for their own needs, have to perform. Besides agricultural concerns they must be expert in woodwork, ironwork, the growth and preparation of their own flax and wool, spinning and weaving, and other things.

The new "working school" teaches and helps in all these, besides concerning itself with gardening and farming, and it can be easily imagined that, however slowly, the peasants are becoming interested in an institution from which they gain so much. The best proof is in the many hundreds of school buildings which have been recently built by the peasants themselves, and the best guarantee for the continued effective progress of the improvement is in the admirable provision made in Moscow for the training of the teachers for these "working schools."

In the Ekaterinsky Square is a huge building, formerly a boarding school for girls of rich families. It has a park, and gardens of many acres in extent. Here are collected 300 peasant instructors, selected by local Soviets from all the corners of Russia. They live in the building, which is large enough to supply living-rooms, classrooms, workshops, living and class room space for a fairly big school of children of both sexes, who are the experimental body. The directors, a woman and a man, are educators of proved ability, great human sympathy, and unbounded enthusiasm. All the operations of the working school are taught theoretically and

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carried out practically in the workshops, the power of imparting the instruction being gained by practice with the children. The necessary house functions and the cultivation of the immense garden, the growth and improvement of seeds and types of plants, are carried out by the peasant students and the children solely.

The result is a happy activity that made me almost envious. The value of it must be seen from the fact that, their course finished, these instructors depart to their own villages to spread the work. The children were mostly from the working class. At first there had been some difficulty, but when I was there (I went a second time alone for a long visit) all was harmonious. The children were in the very best of health and condition, their behaviour was admirable, and their intelligence developing fast.

One other thing is occurring in this school which was hardly in the original programme. I saw an instance, in the section of the workshops devoted to art, of unsuspected talent having been discovered among these peasants. And it may well happen that in this way talent that would otherwise remain hidden and lost may be discovered and trained for the benefit of Russia.

Professor Pokrovsky, in talking of these peasant students, paid them a high tribute. He said: "Among all my audiences I reckon them to be the very best."

For town and factory workers classes and courses in technical subjects and art have been set up. There is a great demand for them, and to supply accommodation use has been made of large houses

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and the halls of the great restaurants and clubs which have been commandeered. Music and dramatics also are studied, and as there is a great upspringing of taste for the theatre, the numbers of entries in Moscow and Petrograd are surprisingly large. The age of beginning work is sixteen, and then the working day is only six hours till the age of eighteen, the remaining two hours being spent in study. Later it is hoped to raise the age of beginning to eighteen. But in the present dearth of workpeople permission has been granted for work to begin at fourteen for four hours a day, on condition that the remaining four hours of a working day are spent in these classes. In these regulations I can see nothing but a good intention towards the youth of Russia and a careful safeguard against any abuse.

Conferences of teachers are held, and I attended one of country teachers in Moscow. They were of all ages and both sexes, well dressed and ill dressed, civilians and soldiers, one in uniform with one foot bandaged and the other bare—hundreds of them, met to discuss the share the teachers would take in mobilization, and whether they would not undertake the raising of the necessary percentage themselves. It was a valuable instance of the way in which the Government treats openly and frankly with the teaching body, as well as an indication of their estimate of the value of teachers to the new régime.

Lenin, whom I saw then for the first time, came unattended to the conference, and spoke for an hour on the duty of each to work individually for the uplifting of Russia. His presence there was

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a criterion of the estimate placed on educative work.

If there is little to be said of the middle-class schools, the secondary system, it should be remembered that the Soviet Republic is a Workers' Republic, and that its Government is little likely to spend thought on institutions which are, as they would say, bourgeois affairs. And the crying need of Russia is, as they recognize, the removal of the illiteracy of the lower population.

An educational expert can easily pick holes in Lunacharsky's schemes. The courses and programmes are summary; the accommodation and equipment are often more summary still. But the Russian masses are for all practical purposes a new people requiring new methods, and the summary nature of the equipment does not trouble a Russian. Grant that, and I think my estimate of the work follows logically: that there is here a realization of the danger of the dense ignorance of the millions of peasants; that with clear vision of the possibilities a great effort, new in some of its phases, is being made to remove it, and already with some success. As time goes on and mistakes are rectified, that success will increase. The work has no specifically Bolshevik tendency; numbers of the teachers are non-Communist, but the percentage of those who accept the Bolshevik creed, already large, grows, in consequence of the work, steadily greater, and who is to say where this movement will end?

But this is not the whole of the work of the Commissariat of Education. The usual picture of a

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socialistic community is one of grey, dull quality, devoid of all the glow and colour that come from art. The reality, so far as Bolshevist Russia is concerned, is quite the opposite. The four great art schools, two in Petrograd and two in Moscow, have been nationalized, and students choose their own professors. The classes function, with a great impetus given to the teaching of the most modern painters, and results at which Lunacharsky smiled a little. But the class work would seem only to have received a tonic shock from the change, and ultra-modern forms of expression will find their own level. To students was given the work of preparing the town decorations for the public fêtes, and here again the taste of the day after to-morrow seemed to be in the ascendant for the time being. The true estimate seems to be that this form of art, instead of being dead, is more lively than ever, and that exaggerated forms of expression do but reflect the great mental and spiritual turmoil caused by the Revolution.

Theatres are nationalized, and a special committee of the Commissariat, as well as a sub-committee of the Moscow Soviet, look after them. But the famous ballet and the even more famous Art Theatre of Moscow have been left to themselves and function as before. Drama, vaudeville, ballet, opera go on, the chief difference being that audiences are changed. They are composed of people who go for the love of the theatre, not as a boring social convention. In the distribution of tickets made through the workers' committees workers have the best chance, and with improved economic con-

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ditions and greater leisure they avail themselves of the opportunity with a will.

The Moscow Soviet maintains concerts of admirable chamber music at small cost, and audiences are large. But their most striking effort is the provision of seven theatres, in gardens and elsewhere, where on Sunday afternoons special performances are given free for children only. I went to one in the Zoological Gardens, where I saw some 2,000 children of all ages up to fourteen intensely interested in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I went among them specially to note their appearance and condition, and came to the conclusion that they would compare favourably with a similar audience of London children. One thing should be noted. Art knows no politics, and the great artists, actors, and singers work as before, with the change, as repeated often to me by very different people, that they are delighted with the appreciation and enthusiasm of their present audiences, and prefer them.

Russia is rich in great collections of treasures of art. My heart had sunk when, with my head full of Western stories, I thought of what might have happened to them. An interview restored my equanimity. The treasures of the Alexander and the Hermitage Museums had been carefully packed and transported to Moscow for safety. They would have been housed there, but as they belong to Petrograd, it was decided not to rob that city of its beautiful property, but to restore them when conditions favoured. The Tretiakovsky Gallery in Moscow is richer than ever, and when I was there was crowded with visitors, largely soldiers, who

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were being taken round by practised guides. Other collections had been formed from the treasures in private houses, and the greatest care was taken of them. Lastly, the old palaces were retained as museums of architecture, decoration, and furniture; the most elaborate care had been spent on them, and they had been visited by vast crowds.

I had to confess that Bolshevist rule, so far from meaning the death of art, had produced conditions that are likely to stimulate it, and the attitude towards it is best expressed in a phrase let fall by Lunacharsky when talking of the theatres, the ballet, and the collections—"We have here the materials of a splendid culture which we would not willingly see die."

XI

THE BOLSHEVIK JUDICIAL SYSTEM

CHARGES against the Bolshevik system of justice (or injustice) had been so pronounced that I found it impossible to believe that any real judicial system could exist. And, once there in Russia, I made a determined effort to discover the facts—whether there were any system, the form in which it had crystallized, and the extent to which it functioned. The Extraordinary Commission, of which so much has been heard, excited my curiosity greatly.

In my long sitting with Kamenev, the President of the Moscow Soviet, I had discussed the Bolshevik judicial system. He talked freely concerning it, and gave me a detailed description. Indeed, he talked so fully that at the end he turned and asked why I had questioned him on the subject, since it was not his department. I explained that I had come to him with this object among others, and that I was grateful for his vivid and lucid explanation. I was more grateful later on, for going to see the Commissary for Justice, Kurski, I had in my mind and in my notes the Kamenev conver-

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sation to act as a control on what I then learned. The two explanations coincided, with the difference that the head of the Department of Justice was naturally able to supply details which Kamenev did not possess.

Hegel's cynical remark that the only thing we learn from history is that people do not learn from history is not quite true here. The Bolsheviks have a system of courts, and that system is founded on what they learned of the practices and necessities of the French Revolution. They have two tribunals: one a People's Court for ordinary civil and criminal cases, the other the Revolutionary Tribunal with special functions. Of these, only the People's Court is intended to be permanent. There is a temporary third court, the Extraordinary Commission, charged with the conduct of cases of counter-revolution, of speculation, sabotage, and misuse of power by officials; but in effect its main task has been the cases of counter-revolution.

Material and formal jurisdiction in Bolshevist Russia is best explained by throwing it into two periods, the first during the months of November and December, 1917, when the people's judges only received general directions, according to which judgments were to be given. And during that period the fundamental State laws published were the decree that all power in the Russian Republic belongs to the Soviets; another decree abolished all former courts; another fixed the working day at eight hours, and another related to marriage and divorce.

The second period began in 1918 with the detailed

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regulation of all laws—e.g. a code of laws relating to family relationship; a code of labour laws; a code of laws concerning the people's courts. There is nothing haphazard about the drawing up of these codes. Some of them I have gone through and found to be extremely precise, minutely elaborated documents. The labour code, e.g., had been drafted first by the Professional Alliances (Trades' Unions), then discussed by the Commissariat of Justice and the Convention of the Soviets, before being adopted. It had first appeared in the Regulations of Tariffs—i.e. rates of pay—regulations which represent an immense labour in classifying and grading occupations and providing for appropriate rates of pay—a practice which knocks on the head the idea of the Soviet Republic as a place where all are on one level, receiving one and the same remuneration. Indeed, it is far otherwise, and the minute gradation of these tariffs is one of the sources of labour troubles; they are too fixed, and so allow no margin for the vaguer cases where one grade shades off into another. There would seem to have been necessity for the code of regulations concerning people's courts, seeing that some 4,000 of them function in Soviet Russia; each district has from three to five of them. In Moscow alone there are fifty or fifty-two people's courts, which in 1918 dealt with some 90,000 criminal cases and with a further list of 40,000 civil cases. The maximum penalty which they can inflict is three years' imprisonment.

The revolutionary tribunals seem to have gone through two similar stages, gradually becoming competent and acting under specified conditions.

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But at first the parallelism which existed between the two kinds of courts led to overlapping of function, especially in the provinces. When the Commissariat of Justice undertook by regulation to define the competency of these revolutionary tribunals it limited them to the fight with counter-revolution. But in the confusion which existed and the misunderstanding of their competency they did not deal with the counter-revolution. It was this failure which led to the extension of the powers and of the field of the Extraordinary Commission.

This Extraordinary Commission, about which and whose head so much has been written and said, began to function at once after the Revolution of October–November, 1917. It was not till later that the regulation was passed which gave to the revolutionary tribunals alone the right of passing capital sentences. It was impossible at first to regulate this Commission, and excesses took place; many death sentences were passed by its Presidium. It was the desire to stop these which led to the passing of the regulations limiting and defining the powers of the courts, and it is particularly stated in the Code of February 1919 that the Extraordinary Commission has no right of passing death sentences except in the case of the taking of armed bandits *in flagrante delicto*, or in cases of an uprising in places where the Commission is working. It is easily conceivable that in the political condition of the country even this regulation opens the door to abuses, and in the hands of unscrupulous men could be turned into an engine of revolutionary tyranny and destruction.

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In 1918 there were thirty-two revolutionary tribunals at work. They dealt with cases of counter-revolution, sabotage, espionage, peculation, pogroms, bribery and forgery, and illegal use of Soviet documents, in number more than 12,000. In 50 per cent. of the cases a verdict was reached; 14 only of the verdicts were death sentences; the rest were dismissals.

Their last codes, those on the land laws and on inheritance, which has been practically abolished, they consider themselves to be their most important legal move.

From the estate of a deceased person property up to the value of 10,000 roubles is allowed to pass to his relatives, the rest lapses to the State. And even here care is exercised that the inheritance shall pass in the first instance to those relatives who are unable to support themselves, or are only partly able. But the law is a blow at inheritance in the usual sense.

On the merits or demerits of the Bolshevik judicial system I offer no opinion. My information was not procured solely from the two men mentioned. I talked on the subject with many people who were quite unsuspecting of my motive, and I looked into their codes and their court records, which can be procured easily in Russia. I only show that they have a system which has been the work of legal minds, for there are jurists as well as professional men of all kinds among the leaders. Its chief quality would seem to be a certain simplicity. By a stroke of irony the people's courts aim not only at punishment of evil but also at reformation of the wrong-

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doer! A first offender is set free on condition that he must not fall again. Should he do so, he pays the penalty of his second offence together with that to which his first crime rendered him liable.

As for the two temporary tribunals, they are justified on the ground of necessity. They say that as they, the Bolsheviks, were working for the materialization of their ideals, they had to have in their hands a machine for counteracting their enemies. Hence, on the French model, the revolutionary tribunals; hence the Extraordinary Commission. That explains, but does not condone, the excesses to which the formation of these courts led. That there were excesses is proved by the care with which the Bolsheviks have tried since to regulate the powers and control the functions of these courts. For the final assessment of responsibility in the matter the world must wait for the future historian of the Russian Revolution who shall have the full evidence in his hands.

XII

BOLSHEVISM AND THE PEOPLE'S HEALTH

ALL who knew Russia in Tsaristic times were quite well aware of the evil condition into which the health of the mass of the population had fallen. The bureaucracy paid little attention to the needs of public hygiene, and the almost invincible ignorance of the peasants made them bitterly hostile to any attempts at improvement by philanthropic individuals. Their housing also was extremely bad, especially in the towns which were industrialized and which contained a large proletariat population. This last point is one that has struck the Commissariats of Labour, Industries, and the Trades' Unions with peculiar force, and one part of their duties is the improvement of the conditions under which the working population lives. In the matter of health the Bolsheviks show that they appreciate fully the existing conditions, and have a scientific forethought of the dangers which lie ahead if these conditions are allowed to continue.

There were in existence under the old régime medical departments and medical attendance for the well-to-do and officials, and quite naturally

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there were medical practitioners in the country, but for general national hygiene no thought whatever was taken.

Under the Kerensky Provisional Government a Medical Council was created, largely a consultative body which drew up plans, but so little of practical value was done that the Bolsheviks, when once they were able to turn their attention to the subject, had a clear field; and as the Soviet Republic is a Workers' Republic, it is evident that the major part of their attention would be directed towards the improvement of hygienic conditions and the provision of medical advice, treatment, and medicines for the *workers*. After considerable trouble, for the experimental stage lasted a long time, the whole of the medical services in the Soviet Republic have been brought together under one head and formed into something which corresponds roughly to the British Ministry of Health, whose chief is Dr. Semashko. Under him, in Moscow, the town has been divided into districts, the doctors have been largely nationalized and apportioned to the various districts, hospitals have been either created or improved, special clinics set up—polyclinics also—while the needs of mothers and of children have received the fullest consideration, and ample provision for them is in process of being made.

That some such development must happen one can see from the fact that the principle of general sick-insurance had been accepted. Under that every citizen of the Soviet Republic has the right to demand free medical assistance from the State, and to get free medicine, treatment, and hospital accommo-

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dition, with—in case of necessity—a convalescent period in a health resort. The State, therefore, had to provide that the principle could be carried out in practice. In the maternity department, under Dr. Lebedev, a lady doctor, the most elaborate arrangements have been made for the provision of accommodation for the mother eight weeks before the birth of a child with a corresponding period after the birth, which period can be extended, if necessity arises, until the child is weaned. While in the hospital the mother, if she be a workwoman, is still paid, the care bestowed upon her as a mother being a gift of the State.

A number of such houses are already functioning and others are in prospect, the difficulty of arranging for the full practice of the scheme being considerably increased by the state of war.

For children special hospitals again are to be created, but one—a heritage of former times—is in operation in the south of Moscow. I visited it, and neither in this country nor America have I ever seen a hospital better arranged, better equipped, or better managed for its particular purpose. Sick children can be taken there and left; mothers can, in infectious cases, remain with their children if necessary; there is a clinic to which some hundreds of mothers go daily for advice, receiving at the same time the appropriate medicines, and in some cases the appropriate food for the child; a hall in which some instruction is given by the doctors to audiences of mothers in the management of their children, with an extremely interesting and instructive set of diagrams and a small museum. With all this

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there is also a special department for the reception and sterilization of milk, which is given out to the mothers requiring it. On this question of milk Dr. Lebedev told me that they had in mind the erection of a central station which should receive the milk from the Soviet farms, sterilize it, and distribute it, to the number of very many thousands of portions daily. At present this sterilization is done in the smaller hospitals like the one I have described. In the huge building where this maternity department of the Commissariat of Social Maintenance is housed, the upper floor—an admirable hall well suited for the purpose—has been adapted for a permanent exhibition of all matters relating to the birth, food, dressing, treatment, and exercise of young children. The hall had been prepared, the installation begun, several very good artists had been pressed into service to assist in preparing the diagrammatic illustrations which are necessary; it looked to me that when finished Moscow would possess a permanent hygienic exhibition capable of indefinite extension, such as very few countries have.

It is intended that the same kind of work shall be extended to the provincial towns. In the meantime efforts are being made to get committees together, headed by properly qualified medical men and women, in the various towns in order to lead the way to the installation of houses, and provide the properly qualified assistants who are necessary. This is wise, for more harm than good would be done by the employment of heterogeneous people in a matter so serious.

This Commissariat of Hygiene or of National

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Health is already doing a very large work, for the general medical services of Moscow is complete; but its programmes are much less developed than those of some other Commissariats; it has to go slowly because its success depends entirely on a trained body of scientific people, and where these are not to be found they have to be provided. The service has a further drawback in the great scarcity of medicaments in Russia. These have invariably been imported for the greater part from abroad, very largely from Germany. The closing of the frontiers has prevented any further entry of drugs, and the shortage is so serious that the Russians have been attempting to manufacture some articles for themselves, with indifferent success. A considerable amount was expended in smuggling medicines from Germany, but the general result is that I have among my memoranda four closely-typed large folios of the drugs which are in immediate great request, and which they are quite unable to procure.

On the whole subject one can say that the unification of the services has produced a certain simplicity which helps in the administration; that the problem of hygiene is fully realized; and that the efforts made are already successful so far as they have gone, but that a vast amount remains to be done which cannot be undertaken properly until conditions are altered.

XIII

BOLSHEVIK STATE CONTROL

INTERVIEW WITH LITVINOFF

(Member of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs, charged with the Western Division, Member of the Commissariat of State Control.)

THE question of the *Control of the Machinery of Government* had been intriguing me. The usual idea in Western Europe is that in the Soviet Republic there can be no control, that each department acts as a law unto itself, with anarchical results. The opportunity of a long journey gave me chance of learning from a member of this Bureau that the reality is far otherwise; that there is in full action, in Russia, a system of control, completer, more insistent, and more effective than in any other country. In justice to the leaders of the Soviet Republic, it must be confessed that they do not shield themselves, no official is spared, from a control that is minuteness personified, as will be seen from the following exposition. This Bureau controls finances and the budget; the efficiency of departments; the efficiency of their acts; and it has the

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power of *compelling departments to improve their work*. It can stop over-lapping or duplication of work ; should it think a department unnecessary, it can suppress it, and this has already been done.

It sees that the decrees (laws) are kept by officials. Should it find that an official is not working properly, it can recommend his removal, and acts as prosecutor in the case of evil-doing officials. It prevents overstaffing (I thought of some of the Ministries set up in England during the war), and it sees that the wages of officials are paid according to the Tariffs. Its powers extend to all departments, to the Chief Executive Committee, to the Commissaries of the People themselves—none are exempt who are officials, for it does not concern itself with private persons. But for officials and officialdom it is the *Supreme Control*.

It goes even further. Every departmental bill to be presented to the Council of People's Commissaries must be agreed to by the Department of State Control, especially if it is a Finance Bill.

The department is subdivided into—

Distribution.—Largely concerned with Food Supply, Agriculture, Railways, Post, etc. At the head of these are specialists who are expert in the business of their departments.

Production.—Controlling the Supreme Council of National Economics, and therefore all industries.

Protection of Labour.—Supervising Labour, Hygiene, Rent, Prisoners of War, etc.

Administration.—Controlling the local Soviets ; the Commissariat of the Council of the People's Commissaries ; the Moscow Soviet.

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From which it can be seen that not only no individual official, but no individual department down to the far-away local Soviet, can escape the net drawn by this Bureau of Control. I find little room left for the dream of anarchical, go-as-you-please tendencies here.

But in addition to its duties and powers as a controlling body, it functions also as *Instructor*. Where necessary it sends down its expert to the local Soviets to instruct officials in the best way of performing their duties, thus positively, as well as by its negative controlling function, maintaining a high level of official performance. I came to the conclusion that it would be no easy matter to become a satisfactory servant of the Soviet. While I could not but admire the spirit which prompted the men of the Soviet to lay this discipline upon themselves, to prove themselves worthy of the principles they profess, I confess that the reality of this control, so diametrically opposed to the current idea of Bolshevik action, gave me a disturbing, if an illuminating, shock.

Lastly, it adds to its duties that of adjudicator of complaints. It contains a *Central Bureau of Complaints*, with branches in every Commissariat and in every local town where complaints can be lodged. At first I did not see whither this was tending. But the explanation is simple. It is important to maintain public confidence in the justice of the system of government, so recently introduced, and if any citizen considers himself to be harmed by any official it will be promptly considered and settled. For, to avoid long and complicated procedure in

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the courts, this Bureau possesses summary powers, and as a consequence the validity of a complaint is swiftly settled. The plans seem to me to be excellent, and they certainly are admirably fitted to strengthen confidence in the new form of government. For, whereas in its position of controlling organ it affects officials only, here it stands as the link between people and officials.

In one of the Bureaux of this department dealing with complaints in Moscow I saw the system at work, and can testify to the swiftness and directness of the procedure. But at the same time the thought presented itself that the excellence of the Bureau will depend entirely on the character of the men who work it, a criticism which I found myself making often, and one which the Bolsheviki confess themselves.

XIV

THE MOSCOW TRAINING SCHOOL FOR OFFICIAL WORKERS

OR, AS IT IS CALLED, THE CENTRAL SCHOOL OF
SOVIET WORK

A CHANCE remark put me on the track of this School, and I spent a day there investigating. It had been in existence for about three months, and is a proof of the swiftness with which the Central Executive acts when the necessity of action is imposed on it. The great building of the Moscow Merchants' Club was taken over, a hurried installation (yet incomplete) of classrooms and lecture halls made, and the immense building overflows with 700 students being trained to act as Soviet workers in the provinces, and 600 students of the School of Party Work, which has been instituted by the Central Committee of the Socialist Party.

The students are selected by the local Soviets, and are nearly all peasants, the sprinkling of intellectuals being very small. Among them are about 100 tribesmen, Kalmucks, Bashkirs, and sixty Cossacks. Among these latter are ten prisoners of war taken from Koltchak, who will return as local

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workers for the Soviet as the provinces are freed from Koltchak's rule. The students are housed, fed, and are given 5 roubles a day for personal expenses, but at the same time many receive their full pay from the local Soviet which sent them to Moscow. For food they are placed outside the categories, and receive 1 lb. of bread a day, with sugar and other food, tobacco, linen, and all necessaries. Both men and women are chosen, the women being housed separately. Some few students who are physically damaged live in the School building, for the rest rooms are found in some of the former great hotels, which are now hives of Soviet workers.

The *courses* last about four months; in the School only theory being taught, for practical work the students are taken out into departments that are actually functioning, which they study on the spot.

There are special courses for Cossacks, about sixty in number, of eight weeks long, followed by an examination. Of this Cossack section the present one is the second. The first counted eighty Cossack students, of whom at the close of their course fifty-five were sent out as workers. The *School of Soviet Work prepares students* to act as secretaries of local Soviets, and managers of sections concerned with land, education, railways, etc., under the local Soviets, while the *work of the Party School* is devoted chiefly to the position, requirements, and indoctrination of the middle class of peasants, whom it is the aim of the Central Executive to lead gently into socialism, as their number and position in a country like Russia make them an important

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political factor. The fact of not being a socialist is no bar to entry, neither of Soviet students, many of whom are non-party, nor of professors, who are all well-known men, and many of whom are not socialists.

As the country needs these workers badly, a severely practical spirit has guided the arrangement of programmes and lectures. The work is divided into sections, corresponding to the various Commissariats, and a student enters the section in whose work in the provinces he wishes to labour. It is intensive teaching, and from what I saw of it, it is good. Thus, the *Agricultural Course* comprised in one week's work studies in cattle, forestry, the land question, and co-operation in agriculture, where lectures were given by specialists. The *Transport Section*, again, in one week tackled electrical railways, the special transport of animals, permanent way building, railway administration, and railway exploitation, all again under well-known professors and engineers.

The Section of Food Control for the week when I was at the School had for programme the coupon system, the Soviet food policy (by Sviderski, one of the Collegium of the Food Control, an admirably competent man), organization of the supply of the population in connection with the nationalization of production, the participation of the workers in production, corn resources, and the determination of the corn surplus, transport in connection with food. Among the lecturers in this section are two socialists.

The Co-operative Section during the same period

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studied the organization and practice of co-operation, legislation for co-operation, and joined with the previous section in Sviderski's lecture on food control. There are many sections, but I give these four programmes, to some of which I listened, in order to show the line of thought which governs the working of the School, where study goes on from ten to twelve o'clock, then a break for dinner, followed by work from 2 to 6.30, with supper, and ending with work in seminar classes in which students join in investigating some point in connection with their class work, or thrash out a complete subject. Even the lectures are followed discussion between the lecturer and his students on questions that bear on the topic of the lecture, either posed by the lecturer or by the students. As a student may not enter before eighteen years of age, the general level of intelligence is pretty high, even though the academic qualification may be small. But care has been taken in this direction also, and facultative courses in mathematics and Russian language and grammar are held. While for the students in the sections of Food Control, State Control, Finance, Agriculture and Co-operation, in all about 250 students, there are obligatory courses in general bookkeeping, of fifty hours during the four months of the course, a further special course of thirty hours towards the close of their time. And at the end there will be an examination, and a prompt sending of satisfactory candidates to work in the provinces. All this sounds bald and unconvincing. What I should like to convey is the feeling I experienced as I went from room to room, from some

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sixty Cossacks listening with rapt attention to their lecturer, to a great hall containing 600 Communist Party students, who not only received a good lecture from Novsky, but carried on an energetic discussion afterwards, which they only stopped in order to welcome the English stranger within their gates; from Sviderski's historical sketch of the rise of food prices, dealt with a masterly grip of the subject, to an interesting talk with the lecturer who is in charge of the special courses for the sixty Cossacks. My life has been spent largely in lecture-rooms, and I know well when an audience is worth the name. Spending a time among these eager students I caught the thrill that every experienced lecturer feels when he is talking to an intent, sympathetic and comprehending body of people. They justified their interest in one huge class by breaking into warm applause at a point made by the teacher. These men and women are exactly of the same type as those in the Manual Training School whom Pokrovsky described as his very best audience. I can well believe the warm tribute paid to these, unasked, by one of the professors. But it is not mere talk: that point I would stress. The written essays of the students, the animated discussions, the seminar practice in research, the practical study *on the spot* of the working of the subjects, be it railways, manufactures, administration or what not—these safeguards provide for the practical direction and utilization of the studies.

And soon will come the period of making a balance-sheet of work, estimating the failures and mistakes, noting the good work, the success of the

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methods—in a word, of taking stock before once again filling the huge building with eager students. And the reflection forced itself upon me: if, every few months, all these hundreds of workers are to be poured out into every corner of Russia, working for the successful administration of Russia on the Soviet system, for the indoctrination of the peasants with the ideas of socialism, and *all of them* eager to serve, young, bubbling over with enthusiasm—if this is so, what is to be said of the system under which they have been called into being, of the leaders who are far-sighted enough to set such value on educated workers?

The fact that the work is proceeding at high pressure does not matter, nor the fact that the installation is summary, and that work and installation go on side by side; nor that all is done with a simplicity of arrangement that would horrify an English University professor—all this is of no consequence. The only thing that matters is the spirit in which the thing is done, and that, if the young president of the students who came to give me a handgrip and a fiery word at parting is any prophet—will be invincible.

XV

BOLSHEVISM AND THE HEALTH OF THE WORKERS

A HOME OF REST KEPT BY THE MOSCOW SOVIET AT ILINSKOE, THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE FORMER GRAND DUKE SERGIUS

I WISHED to see Professor Timiriasev, and learning that he was staying at a sanatorium 35 versts from Moscow, I accepted an invitation to go out and see him, little expecting the experience that awaited me. We motored rapidly out, never being far from the river, getting gradually into finely diversified country, and ended by driving for miles through a magnificent double avenue of limes to a sort of park gate. In reply to my questions I then learned that we were bound for the summer seat of the late Grand Duke Sergius.

This is a large, unpretentious, two-storeyed building with extending wings, built on the height of a gently sloping bank above the Moskva River. The wings continue into two terraces, and the river front has another covered terrace, all being intended solely for use during the hot Russian summer. The view from the river terrace is singularly reminiscent

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of Richmond Hill. A deeply wooded bank falls gently to the river, which here makes a big curve like the Thames above Richmond, while the opposite bank rises in rolling hills that are thick with forest, but broken here and there, affording the most picturesque perspectives. Away on the right beyond the furthest visible point of the river can be seen the Grand Duke's winter house. Woods surround Ilin-skoe, in which easy walks are arranged in all directions, and the soothing peace and beauty of the situation make it not only a desirable residence, but fit it exactly for its present use—it is a sanatorium, a home of rest—maintained by the Moscow Soviet for the use of the workers of Moscow. Where formerly were two people, waited on by an army of servants, were now 150 people of all kinds enjoying a well-earned rest for a longer or shorter period; famous professors and chauffeurs, high officials and children, Soviet workmen and women, workmen with their families, and the chairman of the co-operative machine of all Russia; some staying a month to recuperate after illness, others there only for the week-end or for the Sunday—but all on special medical permission. My companion was a Commissary of the People, whose departmental work was so heavy he could take no holiday, but had instead obtained permission to spend partial week-ends here.

The life is perfectly simple, simple perhaps with a simplicity that could hardly exist outside Russia, but pleasant, cheerful, and eminently restful. The gentle green tracks in the dense woodland are ideal for tired people, the river affords bathing, and for

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the more unable or unwilling there are easy-chairs on the terrace, with a glorious view stretching away in front for the trouble of looking. The very house repaid the trouble expended in walking about it. It had formerly been an imperial seat, had passed in the first half of the nineteenth century into the hands of a very wealthy man with revolutionary tendencies, and at the end of one of the wings is a small pavilion in which the famous Herten used to live. Then it went to Alexander II, whose cabinet and writing-table were still there, and was given by Alexander III to the Grand Duke Sergius; finally, it has fallen to the Moscow Soviet to hold it and use it as a home of rest. Its furniture and decorations remain as they were, and they throw a striking light on the simplicity, to use no other word, of the taste of its former imperial owners and users. At the end of one of the wings a gentle sloping track leads into the forest, and after about 300 yards to a queer-looking turreted building of two floors, which was used as a library. It contains a number of family portraits of a very mediocre order and library cases of books, added to by the various owners, but of which very many bore the *ex libris* plate S.A.—Sergius Alexandrovitch—the last of them. There was a very good selection of French literature, with well-chosen types of the modern schools, a smaller English and German set, and many Russian. Some of the books were illuminating—they bore in pencil the date of their *confiscation*; they had then been bound and added to the library. Some small cases in which were curious and worthless collections, albums of

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family photographs, such as can be found in a suburban or provincial home in England, and some simple furniture, completing the furnishing. The whole was carefully catalogued.

I was taken over this by Professor Pokrovsky, who, with his family, had rested here for a couple of days. But I had come to see Professor Timiriasev and sought him out. The famous botanist, who is a well-known member of the Royal Society, had been ill and was resting in Ilinskoe. He and I talked of the intellectual classes and the university staffs, of their attitude to the Soviet rule, and of the part they were playing with regard to the new life in Russia. I told him of my investigations into the programmes of Lunacharsky and Pokrovsky, of my visits to schools, and of the opinion I had formed of the work that is going on. He, for his part, expressed admiration not only for the schemes, but, as he said, for the progress that has been made with them in a time that can be reckoned in months. But of the intellectual classes, and the professors in the great universities, he deplored the attitude. According to him, it is only a minority that are working whole-heartedly with the Soviet Government. The majority are more or less hostile, though he thought it was only a question of time for them to come round to a more favourable estimate of the existing Government. As I mentioned the popular universities that are being founded and the technical classes that are so largely followed, he said that the attitude of the professors was really suicidal, that their politically uncompromising attitude might leave them in the position of professors

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without students. He sees and approves of the great awakening among the masses of Russians of the keen desire to learn and to develop their faculties. And he insisted again on the ground that had been already won, the progress made in spreading enlightenment. It may well be that the prevailing method in the Tzaristic times of selecting professors for the universities accounts for the irreconcilable attitude of the present remnant. A man of pronounced political opinions could hardly obtain a chair, or if obtained, he had difficulty in retaining it. As a consequence reactionary professors were chosen, who think probably that their chances of promotion or retention, under Koltchak or Denikin, would be certainly imperilled by working for the Soviet Republic. The presence of two famous professors, a botanist and an historian, in this home of rest crowded with men, women and children of all types and of all stages of mental development, yet so completely at home, and finding nothing strange in the juxtaposition, seems to me to be, in a measure, typical of the aim of the Soviet power. The equality at which it aims was there without any jarring. All were served alike, and good manners obtained all round. The only difference noticeable being the respect shown by the young members of the party towards the intellectual eminence of men like Timiriasev and Pökrovsky, whose lives have been spent in public service. The only title heard was "tovarishtch"—comrade—no matter to whom applied, and this, though it strikes queerly at first, ends by making its own appeal—it is so useful and all-embracing. And a moment's

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thought of the use formerly made of the vast green fields between river bank and forest opposite the terrace front of the house—Sergius used to send for soldiers, who had to march the 35 versts from Moscow to parade here and relieve his boredom—with the cheerfulness and joy around me, made me glad indeed to have such a day with others in one of the homes of rest of the Soviet Republic.

XVI

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THE Western world has yet to gain a correct view, a clear perspective, of the men and forces operative in the present Soviet Government of Russia, and I shall try to draw together the impressions made on me by my investigations both in the various Commissariats and in visits to institutions in active work, and by my contact with the men at the head of affairs, hoping that it may help in the formation of this view. First, *Men and their Policy*. They are men of grip, both of the political situation and of the executive office of which each one is the head. Their avowed aim is the preservation of the effects of the Revolution, and through them the setting up of a new social order. To this end they recoil from no act deemed necessary, and this is one of the sources of their power. It is usually said that they are engaged in setting up a system of Communism. They are no such fools. They are fully aware of the impossibility of such an immediate change; and, as Lenin says, "the Communist who wishes to set up a Commune now is no Communist." That is, I think, a profoundly true view, and it

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explains the concessions made in practice, and the form which the Government of Russia temporarily takes.

The chief Commissaries are Communists, the strongest element supporting the Government is Communist, but very many who are at work for the Soviet are not Communists; many are non-party men, but in most cases they work that the Revolution may not be a failure, seeing in the Soviet Government at present its only safeguard. The ultimate aim undoubtedly is a Commune, but the process by which that end is to be attained is the slow setting up of a State capitalism—the State as sole proprietor. There are many things, such as the payment made for corn, the allowance of rent, the payment of salaries to workers, the purchasing of food, and so on, which are all concessions, away from Communism, but which can be allowed in this transition stage of setting up State proprietorship, but which will disappear when the State finds itself in a position to take up these matters and absorb them once for all. This again is a proof of the sound judgment of the leaders. Unless pressed by immediate necessity, as in land and food, a department of the life of the country is not handled until it can be done so effectively; and in the meantime complete nationalization and private enterprise go side by side, until the time and conditions are ripe for the State to intervene once for all.

The usual idea of a chief Commissary as a demagogue who has made himself the head of a public department, a post for which he is totally unfitted, is a farcical travesty of the truth. Many of these

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men have full technical qualifications for the post they occupy. To mention only a few, Krassin (Ways and Communications), Lunacharsky (Education), Miliutin (National Economics), Tomsky and Melnichansky (Trades' Unions), and many others, men who have in addition great energy and driving power, who have already produced vast results under difficulties which would have crushed smaller men. They have destroyed a corrupt bureaucracy ; in replacing it, they have made mistakes, have had to grope their way painfully through the chaos of this overturn. They confess it, but they learned by their experience and their system gained by their mistakes. Another Western calumny needs exposing. These men are profoundly simple in dress, food, life. In that respect they are true to the principles they profess. The alleged orgies are lies. The truth is that they live a life of work to which that of a convict is as child's play, and many of them bear evidences of the terrific strain under which they live. While as for the piling up of money, one has but to say that the highest salary on the tariffs of pay is 3,000 roubles a month, and that Lenin himself has a salary of 2,000 roubles, for that gibe to disappear. Let us at any rate be just.

They have set up "the dictatorship of the proletariat," a phrase which is a fully developed bugbear to Western nations who use it as the complete explanation of Bolshevism, the *raison d'être* of the Soviet Republic. A little thought will put the matter in its right light. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" is not a policy,

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it is but a means to an end, a process in the achieving of a policy. Hard experience of the disastrous results of a coalition of workers and bourgeois showed the danger of losing the effects of the Revolution, while little change was produced in the condition of the masses who had made that Revolution. The rule of the bourgeoisie was the rule of a minority—and disastrous at that. The workers took power and imposed their will, the rule of a majority, to be continued as long as necessary. For it is recognized as only a temporary expedient. When Soviet rule is fully recognized and established, as there will be no classes, the dictatorship of any particular part will be illogical. It is used at present as the necessary means of ensuring the stability of the Government, and of acting effectively against all attempts to overthrow it. Finally, it is flung at the Soviet Republic as a dishonourable thing that among its Commissaries are Jews. Improving on that some go so far as to make Jew and Bolshevik convertible terms, and of the hideous results of this slander reports from the south and west of Russia are full. Well, in any body of Russian revolutionaries there have always been Jews, and in this last great Revolution there were also Jews. And among the Commissaries there are Jews. But why should not a race which among the Russian nationalities has always distinguished itself by its ardour for culture find a place where ability and knowledge are of the first value? The very utmost that can be said is that Jews are found among the prominent men of the Soviet Republic to an extent greater than the pro-

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portion they bear to the entire population. The following numbers speak for themselves: Out of eighteen Commissaries of the People, only one is of Jewish blood, and of 115 members of the Government, only eight are Jews. But I have also seen them as privates and officers at the front, as local Commissaries and officials, and wherever I have seen a Jew there in number infinitely greater have I seen other Russians. The cruelty of this slander can only be properly appreciated on the spot in Russia, where it is used to justify the most hideous cruelties and revolting barbarities committed by Poles, by the soldiery of Denikin and of Koltchak on the Jewish populations who fall into their power. Of these authenticated documentary reports and photographs have been in my hands.

One last remark on the question of the men of the Soviet Republic. If any hopes in the failure of these men have been founded on the slanderous descriptions of them circulated in the west of Europe as self-seekers, gluttons for personal pleasures and for money, German agents, and bloody monsters—after my contact with them and their work, I feel convinced those hopes are doomed to disappointment.

Organization (Political).—Through the local Soviets this extends to the smallest Commune in the country. It is little realized in the west of Europe the strength of the grip which the Soviet system has on the country, growing stronger month by month. Its minuteness is astonishing, and very little can escape its notice or influence. The usual impression of the system of Soviets is a mass of

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committees acting independently all over the country, an anarchic condition of local authorities. The reality is far otherwise. From the Central Executive, through provincial, town, and district Soviets there is close and constant connection. Frequent congresses are called in Moscow to which delegates of the various Soviets are summoned so that action shall be co-ordinated and made appropriate to the various districts. While in the control of industries the way in which the Professional Alliances, who are also largely concerned in the composition of the Soviets, are involved in the various stages of workmen's committees, management, trust, and section committees right up to the Supreme Council of National Economics, ensures the same sort of close organization of all industrial matters, and as these are closely connected with political action, it can be seen what a compact organization obtains. As Miliutin said, the industrial system selects the best brains from among the workers, and I have come across proof of his claim, so that the men who are working the organization are tried and proved men. Further, the State Control Department not only controls most effectively all official action and responsibility, but *instructs* how best to carry out official duties. From all this it can be seen clearly that the idea of a widespread anarchy of authorities is entirely wrong, the reality being an organization, political and economical, of very close tissue, the whole being so strongly connected that, as I said, the life of the country is in its grip, and little or nothing can escape its influence. The chief *agent* in the spread of the principles of Soviet govern-

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ment is of course propaganda, but propaganda of a versatility and a completeness never before experienced. The Communist Party, which is the fighting element in the Soviet power, is, in itself, organized in a formidable fashion, and from time to time sends its chief members, whatever may be the office they hold, into the country whenever the action of the Government needs presenting, explaining, or supporting. The men must obey the call. And when it is considered that these men are powerful speakers and past masters in the art of managing an audience, the effect of this manœuvre can be imagined. The call to special service affects all members of the party, and once given is always obeyed. This voluntary discipline, which is quite rigid, makes of the Communist Party a *corps d'élite* for political propaganda. They are the spear-head of the movement which supports the Soviet Republic, and, consequently, the Social Revolution. Strong precautions are taken before anyone is admitted to the party, and once admitted he is soon aware that he has not entered upon a heritage of privileges, but only of duties, arduous duties. He is enjoined to live up to the professions of the Communist Party, and any lapses are severely treated. For if a case of evil doing occurs among officials and is to be punished, if the defaulting official be a non-Communist, he may be sentenced to hard labour, but if a Communist, he is shot. He atones for the discredit he has brought upon the Communist cause by his life. This is a point which should be considered as against the common report which puts the Sovietists and all their supporters

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as an undisciplined mob. My strong impression is one of iron discipline and a self-abnegation in the political cause to a degree to which I have hitherto been quite unaccustomed. In Moscow itself meetings are held weekly in which the leaders assist, and district Soviets and district party organizations also maintain a stream of meetings every week, all tending in the same direction. I myself attended one of these local meetings in the Presnia quarter. The audience was about 1,000 strong, all workmen, workwomen and soldiers, who sat through long speeches by party workers. Workmen and delegates showed their interest by sending up many questions to the chairman, and all this after having held a party conference in the same theatre. Anyone could attend the meeting, and there seemed no check on any expression of opinion; while the orderly character of the proceedings was most marked. These meetings, which provide excellent debating grounds on the general situation, are eminently educative in a political sense for the public attending them, and they sustain the feeling of the workers which is undoubtedly one of the great supports of the Sovietists. This same propaganda goes on at the front under chosen leaders, and when the teachers are mobilized their function is largely to assist in this particular sort of work. The stream is thus steady, full, and incessant. But the organization of propaganda is not confined to the spoken word. The kinema and the poster are pressed into service, and though some of the posters are weak, there are large numbers which are strikingly effective, the artists succeeding in arresting attention and

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fixing the poster's appeal at a glance. Maps on a very large scale, regular bulletins in chosen wall spaces, abound in the city. You cannot go far without receiving some impression of political value. And the Soviet has gone still further in fixing monuments, temporary and permanent, which are meant to affect the mind through the appeal to the eye and the artistic sense. But one of the experiments which is, in my opinion, likely to have far-reaching results on the entire population of Russia is the school for training Soviet workers, in which also is a party school of the Communists. It is near the end of its first session, but will become a permanency after a stock-taking conference on methods and results, which conference is itself a proof of the strong political sense and pedagogic instinct which are guiding the school. Outside the party school, non-Communist opinions are no bar to a student's entry, nor a professor's activity, the sole requirement being a loyal desire to work for Soviet rule and for maintaining the results of the Revolution. But the effect of turning out into every corner of the country *three times a year* 700 workers and future officials of the local Soviets, and 600 Communist workers among the peasants, can be easily imagined, especially when it is remembered that these students come from all the nationalities existing in Russia, are largely peasants, and return to their own localities when their course of training is finished. Political propaganda is, to my mind, complete, for it covers all the life of Russia; intense, for it is led by competent and determined men; and all-pervading, for I have met with evidence of it even in the small outposts of the extreme front.

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Organization of the Commissariats.—I have interviewed the Commissaries on the work and scope of their departments, and I have seen with my own eyes the minutely elaborate organizations built up during the last twenty months. The number of employés is enormous, and among them are many former bourgeois and many non-party men and women, but the headship of departments and of sub-departments is in the hands of convinced supporters of the policy and aims of the Soviet. Whatever mistakes have been made in the past are corrected in the light of experience, and there is nothing haphazard about the functioning of the great departments of the Government. The Revolution overthrew the bureaucracy with all its corruption, and the Sovietists have no intention of allowing a similar state of things to grow up under their rule. There existed under the old régime a timid body of control. The Sovietists have taken it, expanded it, and turned it into a formidable machine, which actively controls all departments of State, including finance, all the people employed, from the Commissaries of the People downwards, the composition of departments and their efficiency. It prevents duplication, overlapping, needless expenditure, and acts as prosecutor in cases where faults have been committed. It is really the supreme controlling influence in the State, for through its branches it extends to all local Soviets, while through its Bureau of Complaints it takes cognizance of all cases of people who complain of harm at the hands of an official, and thus generates a feeling of confidence in the justice of the Government, in the minds of

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the people even when practised against its own members. For the State Control does not meddle with private persons, its province is the officials. In all this there is, to me, a sincere desire to purify official life and function which corresponds ill to the grotesque caricatures of Soviet government which had become familiar to me during the past two years.

Organization of Transport.—On this vital matter I think my report of the interview with Krassin, the Commissary, speaks sufficiently clearly. The position was, and is yet, one of great difficulty owing to the exhausted condition in which the Great War left the railways, the impossibility of filling up the gaps in material, and the tremendous demands upon the railways which have been maintained ever since. When these things are taken into consideration I think that Krassin has worked wonders, for he has maintained passenger services, though depleted, met the requirements of food control, and has most successfully moved and supplied troops over immense distances, all with the combustion of wood alone. A thing which came recently to my notice gives perhaps the best proof of the efficiency he has introduced into the system. In the provinces retaken from Koltchak the harvest is unusually heavy, and for its collecting the assistance of 50,000 men was required. It was decided to send them, and though these provinces are on the eastern front, whose military demands are very heavy, in a fortnight 20,000 were sent down to harvest, without any dislocation of the already vast service for military purposes. This question of transport is really the

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key to the solution of the problem of the *organization of supplies* for the population. To convey supplies to the districts on the fringe of Soviet territory, which as a rule do not raise a sufficiency of food for themselves, is difficult, and depends on the efficiency of the transport system. It accounts for differences I have myself experienced, e.g. in the west I found people eating oil-cake, while here, in the centre, we have black bread, in what to me, an Englishman, is a sufficient quantity. But the harvest is plentiful, and if it can be gathered, I have come to the conclusion that Soviet Russia has passed through its worst period, the future can only be an improvement. This view is supported by my investigations in the Department of Food Control. As showing the care shown in details of organization it should be noticed that the immense system of co-operative agencies in Russia is to be called in aid. Brought into a unified organization they will be the instrument of the Government in the transactions for corn with the peasants, and will be the means of distributing the goods or money allotted in exchange for corn. As a consequence of this astute move the Chairman of the Co-operative Committee guarantees after harvest a pound of bread per person per day. Should this prove true, it will be a triumph of successful organization for the Department of the Food Control.

One last word on the transport service—*its general condition*. Russia is supplying all she can, under the conditions imposed on her, in reparations and manufacture of new material. But the destruction and wearing out of lines and rolling stock caused by six years of war are so great that the require-

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ments are colossal in amount. An engineer, formerly head of an industrial enterprise in Petrograd, estimated that were trade relations reopened with Russia she would be a purchaser of locomotives, wagons, spare parts, machines for factories with their spare parts, and machines for agriculture to the extent of 25 milliards of roubles! Going through what is one of the largest textile factories in Russia, I mentioned this to the directors, and was told that it was probably true, but that it was impossible to give more than an approximate estimate of the vast needs of Russia, but that as for their own factories they had before the war put out orders to a million roubles for machinery and spare parts not one bit of which had been received, and that there were now six years of additional loss, wear and tear and destruction to be made good.

Finally, my investigations point to an organization of all departments of the Government which is strong, compact, and closely interwoven. It reaches everywhere. It is also very supple, for through it, action, which in Great Britain would be delayed through parliamentary action, is here undertaken with peculiar swiftness and effect.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET REPUBLIC.

Here I have taken particular instances of the activity of the Sovietists concerning which fixed impressions have been produced in West Europe by reports, stories, and by more or less official statements, and have compared them with the realities existing here.

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Children.—One of the things most carefully impressed on me just before leaving Reval was that in Moscow I would find no children under ten years of age. All younger, I was informed, were dead.

The truth is that both Moscow and all parts of Russia I have visited swarm with young children, from babies in arms upwards. And in no country in the world with which I am acquainted is so much care and thought lavished on children by any Government as here in Russia. In saying that I speak with expert knowledge, for my life has been spent in educational work. Up to the age of sixteen food and necessaries are supplied gratis, according to the rate of the highest category. Whoever else may suffer from the stringency of conditions, it is certainly not the children. Education is gratuitous, and has been placed on a footing and planned with a lavishness that bids fair to cope successfully in the future with the dense ignorance of millions of illiterates.

Working schools, popular training classes, people's clubs and associations, technical classes and schools, popular universities continue the work, and everything is planned and much is already done to gratify the thirst for knowledge and improvement that exists among the young. That, at any rate in Moscow, there is no need to arouse. It has arisen spontaneously. And it must exist in the provinces, seeing the ease with which large numbers of peasants, men and women, youths and adults, can be selected for specific training as workers. It looks to me as if the Revolution has produced among the masses of the people an explosion of desire to eat of the

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tree of knowledge. The carrying off of children in colonies to the country in summer is a movement that tends towards physical improvement, and at the same time relieves the food difficulty in towns, by taking the children where food is more plentiful. And it gives opportunities to the older ones of learning to help in the work of the fields. In any case, the guiding motive is the improvement of child life, which has led also to the giving of meals in schools, which when their children are not taken to the country are kept open, that the meals may not be intermitted. And while all this care is poured out on the rearing of the young, an equal amount is bestowed on provision for their recreation and amusement, a work which is crowned by the functioning of seven theatres in Moscow on Sunday afternoons solely for their benefit. The commencing age for work is sixteen years, and up to eighteen years two hours of *the working day* must be spent in class study—by law. Later it is intended to raise the age of beginning work. Here is shown continuously care for those of tender age.

For Infants the beginnings of an elaborate system of care are made in maternity, the medical treatment, nursing and feeding of the little ones, on a scale which when perfected will be unique. Lastly, for all the activities concerning the young there have been ample appropriations of funds made. None of them need suffer from a stinting of the money necessary for their full working.

Women.—So far as emancipation has any meaning it is accomplished here. Women work on the same conditions and on the same pay as men; they act

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in all capacities. The myth so industriously propagated of the nationalization of women is by this time exploded, even in West Europe, but I may as well say that nowhere has it created so much astonishment and amusement as in Russia. Another bugbear—socialistic free love—is equally laid by the heels. Marriage is a civil contract, though no restrictions are placed on the religious function. But the best guarantees for the formation of the normal marriage-tie are the improvement in pay and conditions of life of the workers, and the possibility of obtaining a justifiable divorce. They also act in another direction in the improvement of social order. For, speaking of Moscow, *open prostitution* seems to have disappeared. It may have become secret, but the fact remains that the open plague of the streets of London, Paris, and all the great capitals of my acquaintance has gone. Probably the real reason is the economic one. The improvement of the lot of the worker in Soviet Russia has removed one of the inducements to prostitution; while in instituting repressive measures, the Committee of the Department of Hygiene, which has charge of the subject, has among its members representatives of the Domestic Servants' Professional Alliance, in accordance with the rules of the Soviet. This is a measure that works, as might be expected, for good. The worst cases are, where possible, collected in camps and taught to work, after which they are given the opportunity of a self-respecting life. In some curious way, Soviet rule thus, instead of justifying the descriptions of it as a pandemonium, seems to work for orderliness and decency. Every

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traveller who knew the old Russia is well acquainted with the hordes of *professional beggars*. I have no desire to picture Russia as in the millennium, but in justice it must be said that though there are beggars, they are much less in evidence than formerly; in some places I found none at all; and that steps are to be taken to abolish this pest of the Russian towns by placing those who are able-bodied in houses to work, the incapable in houses to live. In fact, the order which reigns in Moscow is an improvement, not a deterioration. The security is so complete that one can cross the city at all hours with perfect impunity, and, it must be remembered, that there is no street lighting at night, fuel is too scarce and dear. The *police* have been replaced by a militia, who in contrast with the streets of London or Paris, seem almost invisible; but order is maintained.

Lastly, there is the question of the *requisitioning of the houses of the rich* and apportioning them in apartments to workers. Moscow, with an ordinary population of 1,200,000, has always had a bad reputation for the housing of its workers, while on the other hand it possessed great palaces of the nobles and rich merchants, clubs, hotels, and restaurants on a princely scale. The Revolution and the fixing here of the Central Government have produced a great increase of the population, which the state of war and movements of troops also intensify. The Soviet Republic is a Workers' Republic, and, to meet its temporary inability to house decently the workers, for building operations are difficult, the houses of the rich, clubs, etc., were taken and

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their rooms apportioned. Some of them are occupied by various Commissaries or by sub-departments of the Commissariats. Training classes, workmen's clubs and associations, political and educational centres, are housed in others. The remedy is drastic, but the disease was bad, and had to be treated promptly. And many of the proprietors had fled and abandoned their houses. The intention is to build houses for the proper hygienic accommodation of the workers; in the present time of inability to do so this requisitioning was the only resource. And it has produced one good effect: where before were housed but few people, are now many thousands under conditions that are infinitely simpler.

One by one my early impressions have vanished. Contact with the reality has brought the conviction that the rule of the Soviet Republic, so far as it affects children, women, and the departments of social order and security, makes for improvement and not for deterioration. Already there is noticeable improvement to be seen, and if continued, it bids fair to be able to tackle successfully problems that have been too much for the older Governments in the West.

CULTURE UNDER SOVIET RULE.

One of the criticisms usually made of a socialist community is that it must of necessity be a dismal affair of uniformity, with cultivation disappearing, or being maintained at the level of an elementary school. The glories of art would altogether vanish, in fact the texture of a socialist society would admit

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of only the crudest and most inartistic colour. I had myself been so anxious about the treasures of Petrograd and Moscow, not to mention the vast private collections, that I took special pains to learn what had become of them, and whether the usual criticism showed any signs of becoming true. The best answer to my fears was the reply of the Commissary of Education to my questions on this subject, "we have here a rich culture which we would not willingly lose."* And so far from losing it, care is taken to preserve it lovingly, and to use and extend it.

The great collections, public and private, of Petrograd were carefully packed and placed in safety in Moscow, where, but for the feeling that Petrograd ought not to be robbed of its own, they would find a permanent home. In Moscow the Tretyakovsky Gallery is not only maintained, it has been extended from private collections and by buying; while the great palaces filled with treasures of art are maintained as museums for the pleasure and improvement of all. In nationalizing the theatres, care has been taken to preserve the independence of the famous Ballet schools, and of the celebrated Moscow Art Theatre. The fullest opportunity is given to them to continue working on the lines that have brought them their great reputation, while for the other theatres nationalization would appear to have brought only one change—a vast and appreciative audience of those to whom formerly the theatre was almost "forbidden fruit," for the tickets are distributed through the workers' associations. There is, at least here in Moscow, a strong

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movement of taste towards the theatre. The reason of it is hard to find. It is catered for by special committees of the Commissariat of Education, and of the Moscow Soviet, with results both for children and adults which will astonish any who see them. The same can be said of music, which, as a popular educative recreation, has taken on a similar extension. So far from artistic culture being moribund, it appears to have taken a fresh lease of vigorous life. The four great art schools of Petrograd and Moscow, while being nationalized, have been opened to new influences, and their students are stimulated by being allowed to provide the decorations for the official fêtes ; while the first monuments to be set up by the Republic, of men, and of symbolic emblems, give more than a hope that this form of artistic appeal will be controlled by a real and a good taste. To the enjoyment of all these cultivating pleasures come now a mass of people enabled by their greater leisure and improved condition, not only to become aware of them, but to use them ; in strong contrast to their condition under the old régime, when they were not only ignorant of the cultivating pleasures of art, but were cut off from all approach to them. Russia has never lacked genius in any form, certainly not in art, and so far from destroying culture and genius, it looks as if the Socialist Republic, by giving greater opportunities of approach to art, greater leisure for enjoying it, greater chances of application to it, would be far more likely to discover and bring out genius that but for it would have died unnoticed.

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SUMMING UP.

The sum total of my investigations can be quickly expressed. I have not found the millennium—far from it—but the reality is far otherwise than the stories circulated at home would make one believe. The Government is strong. On *a priori* grounds it could be argued that a régime which can hold out for two years under the appalling conditions obtaining in Russia must be strong. But I have evidence of its strength and of the elaborateness of its organization. And it grows stronger. The men in power are sincere, fanatical, if you will, in the strength of their adherence to the principles of the Revolution. This they regard as the opening stage of the world's next period of evolution—the socialistic. Given this, they are capable administrators, profiting by the hard experience they are gaining, quick and supple to make the changes which that experience indicates. And with all that, they are men of simple life, working at intense strain, submitting voluntarily to a discipline of iron and a self-imposed system of control that is complete to an extreme degree. If the tyranny which in the west of Europe it is repeatedly said exists here really does exist, it is not evident. And whatever may be the rigidity with which laws are enforced, it is the same for all. There is not one rule for the governing class and another for the workers: here all obey alike. Instead of anarchy I find a peaceful occupation with the daily business of life in town and country that is astonishing. Orderliness is most marked, and abuses which were

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the plague spot of Russia are beginning to disappear ; while the efforts of the Government for the uplifting of the people, physically, morally, and intellectually, are surprising in character, extent, and success. I find an industry, broken by six years of war and the lack of necessaries, yet functioning and providing in spite of everything for the wants of the people partly, for the army wholly. And its directors are breaking out inventively, starting even now new enterprises and planning great extensions for the happy time they hope and believe is ahead. As for the spirit of the people, I have said that I have not found the millennium, but I find at the back of this Government a mass of the workers solidly. Of the peasants one-third supports the régime, and another third will probably find that its interests rest with the success of the present system. Of the educated classes a portion, a minority, works harmoniously with the Soviet rule, for they see that it is neither mean nor base, but honestly striving for a new, wholesome, and happier social system. The greater part of them are resentful or hostile, and I think that the older and richer members are likely to remain implacably hostile to Bolshevism. In any overturn of a social order there is bound to be resentment and anger from those who suffer in the change. And in the conditions prevailing in Tsaristic Russia it is easy to see who were the people who would suffer most in pocket, pride, and position from a change. But that resentment does not shake the Government, nor do I think that it, of itself, ever will ; while, and the point is important, the continuation of the

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attacks from the outside is making the resistance of the socialist stronger, it is adding, as their helpers and comrades, non-party men, and now even the men of the parties who were opposed to Bolshevism, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.

The Communism which the leaders are out to establish is, at present, imperfect. The pressure of circumstances, traditions, and habits has been too strong and has led to concessions which transform the communistic character of the movement, even while one looks on. And the final transformation of the Bolshevistic régime into something acceptable to the majority of the Russian people is denied by the policy which places a ring of enemies round the country and closes the frontiers hermetically to the modifying influences of commercial relations and intercourse.

This brings up one last point—*the action of the Allies regarding Russia.*

In supporting Koltchak, Denikin, Balakhovitch and Judenitch in their anti-Bolshevik campaigns, they have been supporting men who, whatever their personal character and intentions, are surrounded by the heads of the old régime and by many of its underlings, all eager to restore the old conditions, to reduce peasants and workers to the circumstances of Tsaristic times, and replace the former social order. The small border States have been subsidized to the same end, and when they, with a keener sense of the realities than that of their subsidizers, refuse to do more than maintain their own integrity, the prize dangled before them—the recognition of their independence—is withheld.

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The purpose of this support announced to the world is the destruction of the Bolshevik Government, hoping thus for the disappearance of Bolshevism. This is a confession of ignorance, for Bolshevism is a spiritual phenomenon, and as such is impervious to bullets. The Soviet Republic may be destroyed, but Bolshevism would not, for that, disappear.

The contrary effect is being produced, and Bolshevism grows stronger for the isolated position in which its expressed form is kept.

The blockade is therefore the greatest enemy of the purpose of the blockade, and the *whole policy is futile*. For the accompanying campaign of calumny has defeated its own ends by making thinking people in the long run see good where all is not good, excellence in things open to criticism, white where the Western chancelleries call out black.

No amount of atrocity mongering by violent *ex parte* statements can remove the blood-guiltiness of the protégés of the Allies; no amount of calumny can destroy the fact that the Russian Revolution is at bottom a moral, even a puritanical revolution, making for simplicity and purity of life and government; and no amount of pressure can fit the Russian people with a Government framed and forged in the West. They must find their own. And that they cannot do until the subsidized civil war is brought to an end, and the transforming influences of the Western World are freely felt across frontiers once more open to international traffic.

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